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**SOME ASPECTS OF
RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY
MONUMENTS AND LITERATURE OF
THE SOUTH**

BY

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Some Aspects of Religion as Revealed by Early Monuments and Literature of the South

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South India, and, particularly, the Tamil country, presents a good scope for study of the development of religion, endowed, as it is, with a large number of religious monuments and monumental sculptures amply supplemented by an indigenous literature that also affords material for the periods lacking in monuments. In fact, these two sources help us to understand the growth and evolution of some religious creeds and connected iconography. In these lectures, it will be our endeavour to study certain aspects of the subject with particular reference to Hinduism; the word is meant in its general sense which would connote the religion of the *Vēdas* and the *Agamas*. Of course, the other creeds or religions of the Ājivakas, Jainas and Bauddhas will also lend themselves to such a study, too vast to be covered at present. At the outset it will be remembered that the Vedic cult and other northern creeds came in successive waves making peaceful penetration into Peninsular India. It will be interesting, briefly to note, the then extant beliefs as revealed by the earlier monuments and literature of the local people, who gradually absorbed the incoming creeds and ideas resulting ultimately in a syncretic religion that was at the same time eclectic. In the process it will be seen that much was taken from the new religions and their iconography as well as given to them. This resulted in a later repayment of South India to the North in the matter of further evolved religious forms and thought, for example, the contribution made by the great seers, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, to mention only the most outstanding.

THE MEgalithic CULT

The earliest extant monuments in the South which deserve our consideration here are the megaliths, which strongly betray

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a culture and tradition peculiar to the South.¹ These megaliths which are essentially post-ex-carnation burials are different from the earlier neolithic and later post-cremation burials. Though varied in their architectural nature and methods of construction, they have, besides their characteristic association with large stones, as the very nomenclature would indicate, some essential common features, particularly, in their significance and contents, marking them out as belonging to the same culture-complex. The grave-goods include, in addition to the relatively larger or smaller parts of the carnal (*i.e.*, fractional) remains, iron implements and weapons and pottery of a definite black-and-red type and particularl shapes. They are mostly found on the sloping, uncultivable ground at the foot of the hills or rocky outcrops, forming the water-spreads of large and shallow irrigation tanks. These tanks were in turn formed by bunding up a suitable length further down the slope to impound the rain water from the hilly uplands, or brought by streams from higher elevations. On the other side of the bund, the ground was cleared and cultivated, the fields being irrigated by letting the stored up water through sluices pierced through the bund and channels leading away from them. The vast number of such monuments, which literally occur in thousands, their ubiquity, density and spacial distribution (they are found in almost all the districts of South India) all indicate a number of generations of a vast and settled agricultural people, growing irrigated crops such as rice. Their contents by themselves denote a highly advanced material culture, domestication of animals, including the horse, and great reverence for the dead.

The monuments by their very nature of construction would have involved the efforts of the entire community, since the construction of each one of them, including the transport and erection of huge slabs and boulders of stones could not have been the result of a few men's labour. In contrast, the habitations of these peoples were perhaps of humbler type, of an easily perishable nature that could not endure, so well, as their funerary structures have done. In this respect they are paralleled by the great temples of enduring stone, of a later epoch in juxtaposition with contemporary secular structures of timber and brick which have perished as a result of the onslaughts of time, weather and other natural agencies. The megalithic monuments, therefore, are

1. For a fuller account of recent megalithic studies see *Ancient India*, Nos. 2: (1946), 4: (1947-48); 5: (1949); 8: (1952); 9: (1953); and 15: (1959) and *Transactions of the Archaeoloical Society of South India*, (1958-59).

eloquent about the great veneration and devotion to the dead and belief in *post-mortem* existence, at least in the spirit world.

This is borne out by the ample testimony of the earlier strata of the extant *Saṅgam* literature of the Tamils, which are at least contemporary with the later half of the megalithic phase. This literature, a compilation of earlier poems in later times without due reference to chronology and containing much that resulted from the impact of the northern peoples, their religions and creeds, echoes in its scattered descriptions these funerary practices. We find that king and nobleman, the commoner and peasant, men and women were interred in such a manner, the cult of cremation according to the Vedic rites gradually replacing it, when at last such earlier practices became almost a memory, and that too much distorted as time went by. This one could see from the few references to them in later Tamil literature and late commentaries of the earlier literature, all in the first half of the second millennium after Christ.

To the megalithic monuments involving the use of stones, and the urn burials which is one of the elements of the megalithic complex, we have fairly numerous references in the *Saṅgam* works, entire word pictures of the *iḍukāḍu* or the necropolis, where the dead were exposed and their remains buried and where the erections were both funerary and commemorative monuments. Next only to the numerous references to the *tāli*, (which originally seems to have signified 'burial' in general, but subsequently came to denote the pottery urn or sarcophagus commonly used as interring vessels) we have many references to the *naḍu-kal* or the 'erected stone' both sepulchral and commemorative. The *Tolkāppiyam*, a grammar belonging to the latter part of the *Saṅgam* period has the following definition:

*kātchi kālkōl nīrpāḍai naḍukal
śīrttaku śīrappin perumpadai vālttal*
(*Tol., Porul;* 2:5)

The much later commentator, without a correct knowledge of the original tradition, (as he and others have done in the case of the '*tāli*') would interpret the first three (*kātchi*, *kālkōl* and *nīrpāḍai*) as the quest for a suitable stone, the marking of the figure of the dead person on it, and its ceremonial bath. But in the context of what we have at present come to know of the material objects and the culture revealed by the megalithic monuments, *kātchi* probably meant the lying-in-state for some time, as is even now

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the practice, so that all the relatives and friends can assemble and do the ceremonial wailing. *Kālkōl*, likewise probably meant the exposure of the body to the elements, as would be the case in excarnation, clearly indicated by the many megalithic monuments excavated and studied. *Kāl*, according to the contemporary *Pari-pādal* (3:77)² meant the five elements, the compound in that case meaning (to attain) “the nature of the five elements (*iyarkai eydutal*)”. *Nirpadai* would then refer to the ceremonial washing or purification of the few picked bones left after exposure at a much later date and its burial, and *naḍukal* the erection of the stone (megalith) over it. This was to be followed by *perumpādalai*, the great offering, perhaps with heaps of cooked rice (*perum-cōru* in other contexts) and other food, and by *vāṭtal*—praise or adoration, perhaps with song and dance. The custom of worship and offering *perumpādalai* or *perumcōru* for the first time, or periodically thereafter, in honour or in memory of the dead will be clear from other references in the same literature.

*Peyarum pūḍum eludi adar torum
pili śūttiya pirāngu nilai naḍukal*
(*Aham*, 67:9-10; 131:10-11)

Naḍukal pirāngiya uval iđu parandalai
(*Puram*, 314:3)

*Vil ēr vālkkai viluttodai maravar
val āñ paḍukkai-k-kaḍavuļ pēñmār,
naḍukal pili śūtti, tuḍippaḍuttu
tōppi-k-kallodu turū-u-p-pali koḍukkum*
(*Aham*, 35:6-9)

*il adu kallin śil kuḍi-c-cīrūr
puḍai nađu kallin nāt pali ūtti
nal nīraṭti, ney-ñ nařai koļi iya*
(*Puram*, 329: 1-3)

Interestingly enough the *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* gives the meaning ‘*mudukādu*’ to the word *pirāngiyal*. The decoration of the *naḍukal* with flower garlands and peacock plumes, with shield and lance, offerings including liquor, and worship, are referred to in all the *Śaṅgam* works. The term *eluttu* in this and other similar contexts (e.g. *Aiṅgurunūru* 352: 2; *Aham*, 67: 9) perhaps refers to

2. See the commentary of Parimēlaṭakar—‘*Kāl*’ means the five *bhūtas* or elements—Dr. Swaminatha Iyer’s edition, 1956, p. 25. The next two lines elaborate this idea.

working with paint and brush on the *nadukal*, for no carved or engraved or sculptured specimens are to be seen. But in the excavations in Nāgārjunakonda, where Prākrit and Sanskrit inscriptions of the early centuries of the Christian era were in vogue, such memorial stones called ‘*chāya-kaba*’ with Prākrit inscriptions of the Ikshvāku period (third century A.D.) have been unearthed. (*Vide Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1955-56, p. 24).

Most significant of all was the conception that the dead person became the *nadukal* itself, as could be gathered from many contexts: e.g.

*Nanandalai ulakam arandai tūṅga
kedu il nal iśai śūdi,
naḍukal āyinān puravalan̄ enavē*
(*Puram*, 221: 11-13)

Ur nani iranda pār mudir parandalai,

*pal ān kōvalar padalai śūṭta
kal āyinaiyē*
(*Puram*, 265: 1-5)

The concept of the stone commemorating the dead, or even personifying the dead person, and becoming divine thereby is emphasised in all the contexts.³

*Peyar maruṅgu arimār
Kal erindu elūdiya nal arai marā atta
Kadavul ṣōgiya kādu ēsu kavalai*
(*Pattup., Malaipadu*, 394-96)

The *Silappadikāram* (v: line 127) refers to a temple with an erect stone as the object of worship—*neḍun̄ kal nin̄ra man̄ram*.

This strong tradition of associating stone with the dead, has endured for a long time among the peoples of the south, particularly the Tamils who refer to the two great events in a man's life by the significant saying “*kalyāṇam* and *kalleḍuppu*”, the former referring to wedlock and the latter referring to death euphemistically, as raising of the stone memorial. This, as we

3. For other references to *nadukal* and its worship see *Aham*, 297: 6-7; *Atiṅgurunūru*, 352: 2; *Puram*, 223: 3; 232: 3-6; 260: 25-28; 263: 8, 264: 1-4, 306: 3-4. For references to *perum cōru* see *Padirrappattu*, 30: 43-44, *Aham*, 233: 7-10; *Puram* 2: 16, 261: 2-4; *Pattinappālai*, lines 78-79.

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would see later, was the obvious reason for the non-adoption of stone as the building material for temples and sacred edifices, and the making of images for worship, till about the 7th-8th centuries A.D., while in contrast stone was used in the architecture and sculpture of the Buddhist monuments which centred round the *stūpa* which was essentially funerary—the *dhatu-garba*, prior to and in the early centuries of the Christian era. This would explain the paucity of standing religious edifices of the Brahmanical religion till they were excavated out of rock or built of stone in the 7th-8th centuries A.D. and after.

The same custom has continued in the erection—*kannādu* (as the Kulidikki inscription calls it), or *vīrakkal* or hero-stones, bearing inscriptions with or without sculptures and other symbols. Such hero-stones abound in many districts of Tamilnad today, including the outlying Kannada and Telugu areas, and they are locally called *Pattavan-kal*, *Pattavan* denoting the deified person who died as a hero, or immolated himself in observance of a vow.

Likewise, the deification of women who performed *sati*, was a growing cult, ever since the idea of *karpu* gained dominance and this *Pattini* cult was a very strong one for centuries later from the time of the *Silappadikāram*. We have the earliest references to the wife desiring burial along with her dead husband in *Puram* 256 where she implores the potter to make the burial urn for the dead husband big enough for her also, who like a little lizard sticking to the wheel of the chariot has been attached to her lord, in all the vicissitudes of life.

The concept of *karpu* or chastity and Arundhatī as the ideal thereof, is mentioned in the earliest of the works—*Aīngurunūru* (441). *Puram* 246 purports to be the words of *Peungō-p-penḍu* the queen of Bhūta Pāṇdiyan when she committed *sati* on the funeral pyre of her husband. Material relics of such *sati* practices in the 3rd-4th centuries A.D., including inscribed and sculptured stones showing the *sati* descending into the fire pit, and other relics have been recently excavated in Nāgārjunakonḍa.⁴

The instance of a woman called Tirumāvunni cutting off one of her breasts, standing under the *vēṅgai* (*Pterocarpus*) tree in which resided a god, in *Narrinai* 216 and an old verse called *Pattini-c-ceyyuḷ* quoted in the *Yāpparūngalam* (p. 351), probably

supplied the theme to the Kannaki story in the *Silappadikāram*.⁵ The deification of the legendary Kannaki as *Pattini-k-kadavul*, the fetching of a stone for that purpose from the north and her identification with Durgā or Bhagavatī are well known. Such stones with inscriptions and sculptural representations in relief, often shown as an arm bent up at right angles at the elbow, palm facing out, are called in the Kannada districts as *tōl-kai-kotṭakamba*. They are generally called *Māsatikals* (*mahā-sati-kal*). Often a *vīrakal* and *māsatikal* are combined in one showing the husband and the wife, who performed *sati*, together at the top in their heavenly abode and with inscriptions below. They are found in many districts of South India, even as far south as Tenkāsi in the Tirunelvēli District up till very late mediaeval times.

The *Kandu*, perhaps a pillar or post (wooden), planted on a platform set up in the *podiyil* and believed to be the abode of, or representation of, a deity was also an aniconic object of worship in early times as will be seen from the following:

*marai ēru śorinda, māttāt kandin
surai ivar podiyil aṁ gudi-c-cīrūr*

(Aham, 287: 4-5)

*Kali kelu kadavul kandam kai vīda-
bali kañ māriya pāl pađu podiyil*

(Puram, 52: 12-13)

*Kondi makalir, uñturai mūlki,
andi māttiya nandā vilakkin
malar añi melukkam, ēri-p-palar tola
vambala śékkum kandudai-p-podiyil
parunilai nedun tūñ olka-t-tiñdi*

(Pattinappālai, 246-249)

The *Kalittogai* (120: 16) refers to *Kandu ādal sāñravar* (the great becoming the *kandu*).

The *Kandali* mentioned as an object of hymns in *Tolkāppiyam* (*Porul*, ii, 33) was perhaps the same as the *Kandu*. *Kandali* is also

5. Vaiyapuri Pillai: *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, (1956), pp. 146-47 and *Ilakkiya Mani Mälai*, (Madras 1954), pp. 146-52,

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mentioned as one of the patron deities of the merchant guilds of the mediaeval times.

The *Maṇimēkalai* (Ch. 28: 185) describes a *Kandir-pāvai* or goddess residing (or represented) in the *Kandu*. Naccinārkiṇiyār's explanation of *kandali* as the principle beyond all manifested ones which stands alone, without form and without attachment, is a very late idea echoing the evolved concept of abstract god-head of his own times, which was not so well understood in those early periods of *Saṅgam* literature. Even to-day it is not unusual for a tree or small stone or brick or even a platform bare, or with a spear, sickle or club planted on it, to be conceived as the representation of a village god and such are to be found in every village of the Tamil country.

Curiously enough a number of memorial slabs of crudely dressed stones, found in the Tirukkōyilūr Taluk of South Arcot District, with inscriptions of the 10th-11th century A.D., but without any sculptured representations on them, are called *tari* in their inscriptions. *Tari* like *Kandu* would mean an upright pillar or post. These stones are commemorative of certain vows called *parani* or *nōṇbu*, as stated in the same inscriptions, fulfilled by women whose names are also mentioned.⁶

Another object of worship by the fisher-folk on the sea shore was the toothed rostrum of the gravid shark or saw-fish planted on the sandy beach adorned with flowers and worshipped with offering, song and dance. Such a worship is described in the *Pattinapālai* (83-89).

*nilavu aḍainda iruḷ pōla
valai uṇaiṇgum maṇal muṇril;
vūl-t-tālai-tāt tālnda
veṇ kūṭalattu-t-taṇ puṇ kōdaiyar
śinai-c-curavin kōdu nattu
maṇai-c-cēṛtiya val aṇaṅgiṇāṇ*

Besides these were the gods and spirits residing in trees, hills, rivers, tanks, and in the cross-roads as local guardians. Many of the trees were totem gods, and this tradition continued in later times, particularly in the Śaivite temples as the *sthalavriksha*, eg. *Tillai*, *Vannī* etc.

6. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1938, Part II, para. 81.

In the time of the *Maṇimēkalai*, when cremation became more common, the necropolis as described in the story of the *Sakkara-välakōṭtam*, contained brick-built memorial shrines, for the saints (*aruntavar*), kings, *satis*, who gave up their lives along with their husbands, and for other people, with their various *varṇas* and sexes indicated, raised in their honour by their relatives (*Mani*, VI, 54-59). These were found along with the temple of Durgā and the megalithic monuments (*Nirai-kal-terri*) and *kandus* or posts representing deities to which *balis* (offerings) were made.

ADVENT OF STONE FOR SACRED PURPOSES

When Pallava Mahēndravarman I excavated his first cave temple without the use of the traditional brick, timber, mortar and metal in Maṇḍagappaṭṭu for the Trimūrti (Brahma, Vishṇu and Śiva) as he proclaims in his inscription there, he calls himself a *vichitra-chitta*. He could claim to be so (or was called so) for more than one reason. He was the first to create such permanent abodes of god in hard and enduring stone in a land of brick-and-timber temples. Secondly, even at that, he was the first to excavate into hard rocks like granite, while his contemporaries and rivals in war and art, the Chāluκyas, did create such temples in the softer sandstone, following the tradition of the Mauryas and the Guptas and of the Āndhras and Ikshvākus, who instead of sandstone chose the softer trap rocks of Western India and the Palnād lime-stone of the east coast of Āndhra for their work. Mahēndra's cave temples were really an achievement when viewed against that background, since for nearly a thousand years after Aśoka and Daśaratha made their first and last excavations of the caves in the granite of Barābar and Nāgārjuni hills near Gaya and changed over to the softer sandstone for the pillars, sculptures and other erections thus starting a long tradition of work on softer stones.

The hard nature of the material, the difficulty involved and time taken in working it, limited, not only the size of Mahēndra's cave temples, but also their sculptures and embellishments, as compared with the contemporary work of the Chāluκyas and the earlier dynasties who could work with greater ease on the softer stones, resulting in greater quantity of sculptural and other embellishment. Subsequently Mahēndra excavated cave temples dedicated solely either to Vishṇu, as at Mahēndravāḍi and Māmaṇḍūr (first cave temple) or to Śiva as at Vallam (upper cave), Daļavāṇūr, Śiyamangalam and Tiruchirāpalli (upper cave). The

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caves at Pallāvaram, Māmaṇḍūr (second cave) etc., were dedicated to more than one god, having three or five shrine cells.

The simple type of cave temple continued to be excavated by the successors of Mahēndra and after some time by the contemporary Pāṇḍyas, the Adigaimāns and Muttaraiyars in their respective territories, in hard granite. Māmallā by himself made innovations and started another series of cave temples with more ornate facades and pillars and also the monolithic *vimānas* popularly called *rathas*, all confined to Mahābalipuram.

It was Paramēśvaravarman I who made the first experiment at Kūram, and Tirukkalukun̄ram to erect structural temples, which were real constructions, out of slabs of granite. Following him Rājasimha perfected the technique and erected the earliest structural temples extant as such, as in Mahābalipuram, Kāñchī and Panamalai. While the cave temples imitated the interior aspects of contemporary brick and timber structural temples, the *rathas* and structural temples were stone reproductions of both the exterior and interior aspects of brick and timber temples even to the minutest detail.

A close scrutiny of the earlier cave temples and *rathas* reveals that though Mahēndra and Māmallā deviated from the traditional materials of construction, they perhaps could not do so in respect of the principal image consecrated. In the earlier and contemporary temples, the principal object of worship consecrated was a painting on the wall or one fixed to the wall, or picked out or moulded in stucco and painted, or of wood, carved and appropriately painted. Among the many references in the *Saṅgam* and post-*Saṅgam* works, we can quote the following in support of this fact.

*It̄tikai nedum śuvar vittam vil̄ndena
maṇi-p-purā-t-turanda maran śōr mādattu
eludu ani kadavul*

(Aham, 167: 13-15)

*..... kēl koḷa-k
kālpuṇaindu iyarriya vanappu amai nōn śuvar-p-
pāvaiyum bali ena-p-perā- a;*

(Aham, 369: 6-8)

*kayam kandanna vayangudai nagarattu,
śembu iyanranna sem śuvar punaindu*

(Pattupāṭṭu, Maduraik., 11: 484-85)

avar avar tām tām arindavāru ētti
 ivar ivar em̄ perumāṇ en̄ru, śuvar misai-c-
 cūr̄t̄iyum vaittum tol̄uvar: ulaku al̄anda
 mūrti uruvē mudal.

*(Divya Prabandham—2095—Poygai Alvār—Iyarpā,
 verse 14).*

The *Avanti-Sundarī-Kathā-Sāra*⁷ narrates how the queen of Rājahamsa offered worship to Guha in the cave temple and saw the wall painting (*bhitti citra*) of Guha playing beside his parents (evidently the Sōmaskanda panel), and a son was born to her, as a result of her wish and prayer.

Even today many of the great temples have their principal images in worship in the *garbhagriha* made of stucco eg. the Raṅganātha in Śrirāngam and the Anantapadmanābha in Trivandrum, or of wood eg. in the Vishnu temple at Tirukkōyilūr, and the earlier image of Attivaradar of the Varadarājaperumāl temple in Kāñchi, which is kept inside the tank to be taken out periodically. Mahēndra and Māmalla could not, therefore, make the principal images in the sanctum of their temples, in stone, even as bas-reliefs on the wall. As such, all these cave temples have empty shrines with tell-tale traces of the original painted image on the wall, or with small platforms for brick and stucco images against the hind wall, or with square or rectangular depressions on the hind wall of the sanctum for the insertion of carved wooden plaques.

The recent finds in the Nāgārjunakonḍa excavations of the remains of the brick temple of *Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi* of about the 3rd-4th century A.D., and of a lime stone slab with a large slot for the insertion of the base of a wooden image,⁸ with an inscription in front of the slot, further confirm this. The inscription refers to the consecration of *Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi* (eight armed Vishṇu) made of *audumbara* wood (fig-wood), a material described in all *Śilpa* and *Āgama* literature as the most suitable for making images. Even the later *Agama* and *Śilpa* texts traditionally prescribe wood as the first material, then others, such as *kaḍi śarkarā* (mortar) or paint (*citra*) and metal, and, last of all, stone. Even the stone images were to be plastered and painted appropriately, a thing to

7. Ed. Harihara Sastri—Kuppuswami Sastri Research Institute, Madras (1957); III, vv. 37-38.

8. *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1958-59, p. 8.

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be seen in many temples even today. It was only in the time of Paramēśvaravarman I, that we see bas-reliefs in stone carved on the back walls of the sanctum in the cave temples and *rathas*, he completed or made, and such reliefs are to be found in the structural temples of Rājasimha also. The contemporary Pāṇḍyas, and kings of other dynasties, who excavated cave temples, dating after the time of Paramēśvara I (670-700 A.D.) had bas-reliefs of the concerned deities, carved on the back walls of the sanctum of their cave temples or had rock-cut *lingas*. The next step was the installation of slabs containing bas-reliefs or high reliefs of the deities at the centre of the floor of the sanctum to be followed later by sculptures in round, of stone.

The tradition of associating stone with the funeral was so strong that all this could not happen even at the outset, and at least a section of the people had to reconcile themselves to the use, for sacred purposes, of the prohibited material that was more instinctively associated with the funeral. Even so the contemporary leaders of religious thought, the early Nāyanmārs, and the Ālvārs, the exponents of the strong *bhakti* movement, who made it a point to travel widely and visit every shrine and sing their hymns, have bye-passed these innovations. Not one of the rock-cut cave temples, nor even the great contemporary achievements in sculpture and architecture, has been referred to by them in any of the thousands of hymns they have sung. On the other hand they have sung about what would appear to be small and architecturally insignificant temples, and even gods in humbler habitations. Their orthodoxy appears so strong. It is only one of the Ālvārs, viz., Tirumaṅgai, that refers to the Paramēccura-viṇagaram, built by the Pallava—identified as the stone temple in Kāñchi, now called the Vaikunṭha-p-perumāl, built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla. Otherwise these stone temples had to wait till the time of the Chōlas, to become important by their own additions of accessory structures to existing ones and also by their building stone temples in a number of places, or re-building in stone many of the earlier brick and timber structures hallowed by the Śaiva and Vaishṇava saints. Side by side the custom of building memorial shrines, referred to earlier in the *Maṇimēkalai*, in stone became also common in later Pallava and early Chōla times. Such were called *Pallippadai*.⁹ The shrines in a line outside the Kailāsanātha tem-

9. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 429 of 1902; 230 of 1903; and 271 of 1927; *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, 16.

ple, Kāñci, at least some of them, *e.g.* the Nityaviniśvara, seem to be such memorial shrines. This is reminiscent of the *Dēvarāja* cult, which had a much wider development in the Far East.

It was then, over this strong substratum of a cult of the worship of the great dead, symbolised by lithic monuments, intermixed with the animistic and shamanistic concepts, that the four great creeds of the north *viz.*, those of the *Vēdic* Hindus, Jains, the Ājivakas and the Buddhists were superimposed. They actively penetrated in waves starting from a time three or four centuries, if not earlier, before the commencement of the Christian era. This gave a spurt not only to the rise and growth of literature, but also gradually influenced local religion and beliefs, the incoming faiths getting themselves transformed in the process by their contact with the existing culture which by all evidences, literary and material, was an advanced one. It was a process not only of introduction but also of transformation by assimilation and identification with the local gods and beliefs.

THE EARLY RELIGIOUS CULTS

Taking into consideration the Hindu impact, we find in the earlier strata of the *Saṅgam* literature, belonging to the first half of the first millennium A.D., references to *Vēdic* ideas, customs and sacrifices and to the Hindu gods in their new habitations, forms and attributes mixed with much that was indigenous. In the absence of any contemporary iconographic representations, plastic or graphic, we have to seek for information only from the literary sources. The syncretic forms of Māyōn and Vāliyōn or Nāgar, the local forms of Krshna and Balarāma, Ševvēl or Neduvēl, the Murugan of the Tamils corresponding to Kārttikēya-Skanda-Vaiśākha-Subrahmanyā, the three-eyed Śiva, Korra vai or Aiyai, or Kādurai Kaṭavuḷ also called Kān-amar-śelvi, the aspect of Durgā, have been evolved. Vēndan or the lord of the celestials, *i.e.*, Indra, and Varuṇa, Brahmā the creator, and Ādiśeṣha, are also referred to.

VISHNU

The *Bhāgavata* cult of Krishṇa and Balarāma, or Vāsudēva-Saṅkarshaṇa was popular as in contemporary north India. They are described respectively as dark and white complexioned. Māyōn's flag was the kite and his symbol or weapon the *nēmi* or discus, while Vāliyōn's was the palmyra and his weapon the *nāñjil* or *mēli*, the plough. (*Purāṇam*, 46 and 58). In *Purāṇam* 58 Māyōn

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is described as *Veyyōn* (the Sun god) that bears the kite (*garuḍa*) flag, suggesting a synthesis of *Sūrya* and *Vishṇu*. The still earlier *Narrinai* (32: 1-2) uses in a simile the contrasting colours of *Māyōn* and *Vāliyōn*.

*kaṭal valar puri valai puraiyum mēni,
adal ven nāñjil, panai-k-kodiyōnum;
mannuru tirumani puraiyum mēni,
viñ-uyar-putkodi, viral veyyōnum*

(*Puram*, 56: 3-6).

*pāl nira uruvin panai-k-kodiyōnum
nīl nira uruvin nēmiyōnum*

(*Puram*, 58: 14-15)

*māyōn anṇa māl varai-k-kavā an
vāliyōn anṇa vayañgu vel aruvi*

(*Narrinai*, 32: 1-2)

Vishṇu as *Anantaśāyi* is described in the later *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection, in which the reclining deity is mentioned in the *Perumbāñarruppādai* (lines 371-73), and in the description of *Kāñci* (lines 492-405) the city is likened to the lotus that bears *Brahmā* of the four faces and who rose out of the navel of *Nediyōn* (*Vishṇu*). Again as *Trivikrama* and the one who bears *Tiru* (*Śri*) in his chest, he is mentioned in the same poem (lines 29-31). The story of *Vishṇu* coming as a dwarf and subsequently assuming the *Trivikrama* form to measure the earth is referred to in *Maṇi-mēkalai* (xix: 51-52) and the discomfiture of *Bali* in *Tirukkural* (61:10). The *Mullaippāṭṭu* (lines 1-3) of the *Pattupāṭṭu* collection refers to *Vishṇu* as the holder of the conch and discus who also rose up in stature as *Trivikrama*.

The *Paripādal*, a post-Saṅgam collection, dating between the 5th and 7th centuries A.D., which had eight long poems on *Vishṇu*, of which six complete ones and stray verses of the rest are extant, shows a full development of the forms and attributes of *Vishṇu* and his different iconic forms such as *Varāha*, *Trivikrama*, *Narasimha*, *Krishṇa*, in his *Viśvarūpa* form as *Virāṭpurusha*, and also in the four *vyūha* forms—*Vāsudēva*, *Saṅkarshana*, *Kāma* or *Pra-dyumna* and *Aniruddha*.

*Seṅgaṭ Kāri ! Karum kaṇ vellai !
Ponkatpacce ! Painkaṇ mā-al !*

(*Paripādal*, 3: 81-82)

In another context, (4: 36-42) it mentions their flags as *Palmyra*, *Plough*, *Elephant* and *Garuḍa*. Significantly enough the elephant, as one of the flags is substituted for the usual *Makara* flag of Pradyumna. *Paripāḍal* (15) refers to *Tirumālirunkunram* as the abode of both *Balarāma* and *Krishṇa*.

The *Śilappadikāram* mentions in many contexts the temples dedicated to *Māyōn* and *Vāliyōn*

Vāl valar mēni Vāliyōn Kōyilum

Nīla mēni Nediyōn Kōyilum

(v: lines 171-172)

Pukar vellai nāgar tam kōṭtam

(ix: line 10)

Mēli valan uyartta vellai nagaramum

(xiv: line 9)

The shrines in the three contexts are called *kōṭtam*, *kōyil* and *nagaram*.¹⁰

A Pallava Grantha inscription (650-700 A.D.) in florid script in the Ādivarāha cave temple at Māmallalpuam enumerates, for the first time, the ten *avatārs* or incarnations of Vishṇu as follows:

*Matsyah—Kūrmō—Varāhaścha—Nārasimhaś cha Vāmanah |
Rāmō Rāmaścha Rāmaścha Buddhaḥ Kalki cha tē dasāḥ ||*

10. The term *kōyil* (*kō-il*) used to denote an abode of a god, as against its real connotation of a king's abode or palace (as obtains in Malayalam even today) indicates clearly the late character of *Śilappadikāram*. Such a term is unusual even in the early lithic inscriptions of the 7th-10th centuries A.D. i.e., in the time of the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas of that period but found frequently in the *Tēvāram* and *Prabandham*. The term *kōyil* referring to a temple occurs only rarely, in three cases, for the first time, viz., in the Pallava inscription at Śirgambakkam (*Epigraphia Indica* xxxii, p. 290) of the first year of Paramēśvaravarman I (670-700), in the sixth year of Mārañjadaiyan in Tirupparankunram (773 A.D.) and in the recently discovered Pāṇḍya inscription in the cave temple at Malaiyaḍikkupichi of seventeenth year of Māraṇ Sēndan (8th-9th centuries A. D.) where the respective cave temples are called *Kō-il* and *Karrirukkōyil* (*Kal-tiru-k-kōyil*). The term *Kōṭtam* in the latter *Śilpa* works denotes a rectangular shrine with a wagon top or *śāla* roof which is invariably a feature of dēvī shrines. *Nagaram* is significant. The term also occurs in the sense of a temple in *Pattup-pāṭṭu* (*Maduraikkāñji*, line 484) and *Paripāḍal*—(*Tirattu*—lines 49, 59, and 60)

Significantly enough Krshṇa is omitted but in his place Buddha is mentioned as the ninth incarnation. Paraśurāma is referred to as *man̄ maruṅgarutta maļuvā nediyōn* in *Maṇimēkalai* (22:25) and as *maļuvālan man̄nar maruṅgaruttu māl*, in the *Tolkāppiyam* (*Pūrat: Sutra 13*). The *Śilappadikāram* (xi: 35-51) describes the recumbent form of Vishṇu on the serpent couch in Śriraṅgam and the standing form of Vishṇu in Tiruvēṅgaḍam, again pointing out to its late date.

Of the three, Balarāma, Krishṇa and Subhadrā, the last is not mentioned in the earlier texts as such, though Durgā, who is associated in one of her aspects with Krishṇa and Balarāma as Ēkānamśa or Subhadrā, is mentioned as the sister of Māyōn, (*Māl-avar-k-ku-iļangilai*) in *Śilappadikāram* (xii: line 68). But on the other hand Māyōn is associated with Piññai or Nappiññai or Napinnai, one of the āychchiyar (*gōpis*) as his favourite dēvi. Vāliyōn or Vellai Nāgar (Balarāma), Māyōn (Vāsudēva) and Napinnai (associated with Nilā-dēvī in later times) are impersonated in the dance called *Aychchiyar Kuravai*, which is the theme of Chapter xvii of *Śilappadikāram*. The Krishṇa-Napinnai cult is referred to profusely in *Nälāyira-Prabandham*, eg. by Āṇḍal in her *Tiruppāvai* (verse 19, line 19), assignable to the second half of the 9th century A.D. This combination is also referred to by Sundarar in the *Tēvāram* (7875: 7th *Tirumurai*, 63rd decad, v. 7, line 1) as “*Piññai nambum puyattān Neđumāl*”. Krishṇa is said to have married Napinnai in the traditional manner after a bull baiting contest (*kol-ēru-taluvudal*) in which he embraced and defeated seven bulls, eg. *Prabandham*, 3168; *Tiruvāyamoli*, 3, 5: v. 4—has “*vambu avil Kōdai poruttā, māl viđai*

and it perhaps refers to the type of a temple of the *nāgara* class of the *Śilpa* texts denoting a square *vimāna* with a four-sided domical roof.

Kayam kandarṇa vayaṅguđai nagarattu
(*Maduraik*, line 484)

Iru kēl utti an̄inda eruttin
varai keļu selvan̄ nagar
(*Paripāđal-Tiratṭu*, lines 48-49)

Pūmuđi nāgar nagar
(*ibid.*, line 59)
Kuļavāyi amarndān nagar
(*ibid.*, line 63).

The word ‘Nagaram’ is used in the sense of a temple, in an Eastern Chālukya copper-plate of Kali Vishṇuvardhana (847-49 A.D.): No. 1 of 1953-54, *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, 1953-54, p. 2, para 2.

ēlum adartta Šempavala-t-tiralvāyan”. The fight with the seven bulls is also referred to by Appar in *Tēvāram* (4638: 4th *Tirumurai*, 49th *padikam*, v. 5, line 1) as “*Ērudan ēlu-adarndān*”.

This peculiar Tamil tradition was strong even in the time of the *Jīvakachintāmani*, assignable to the first half of the 10th century A.D. Incidentally this also brings the date of the *Šilappadi-kāram* nearer to Āṇḍāl and *Chintāmani*. This association of Balarāma, Kṛishṇa and Nappinnai, is reflected in the only sculpture of the kind in Māmallapuram, viz., the famous Gōvardhana scene, in the so called Kṛishṇa maṇḍapa. This is a large rock relief depicting the story of Kṛishṇa holding up the hill Gōvardhana as an umbrella, to protect his community of cowherds along with their kine, from the wrath of Indra. Under this shelter are shown cowherds, their women and children, with their cattle and other belongings, all crowding into the shelter. On the right half of the panel stands Balarāma, leaning affectionately over the shoulders of a nearby cowherd, and next to him stands Kṛishṇa with a woman, marked out from the rest by her costume and pose and leaning on an attendant lady nearby. Her importance would clearly make her out as Nappinnai, the beloved of Kṛishṇa. But for this, and another sculpture relating to Kāliyamardana, on one of the storeys of the Dharmarāja ratha, *Bhāgavata* scenes relating to the Kṛishṇa episodes are absent in the Pallava and contemporary rock-cut architecture of the Tamil country.

Of the *Rāmayāna*, not even one scene or episode is represented till we come to the early Chōla temples of 9th-10th centuries A.D. eg. Nāgēśvara (Kumbakōṇam), Viratṭānēśvara (Kaṇḍiyūr) and the Śiva temple in Puñjai. The *Saṅgam* classics have references to these and the hymns of the Ālvārs and the Nāyañmārs are replete with these. The *Mahābhārata* epic, too, seems to have been rendered into Tamil during this period. The author of this epic Bhāratam-pādiya Perundēvanār, (c. 10th century A.D.) has contributed the invocatory verses in praise of Śiva, Murugan and Tirumāl to the different *Saṅgam* collections. The first verses of the imprecation at the beginning of *Kuruntokai* and *Narrinai*, seem almost like a translation of a ślōka in *Vishṇu Sahasranāma*. This absence of sculptures relating to these epics and *purāṇas* in the earlier monuments is in marked contrast to what obtains in the contemporary Chālukyan and Rāshṭrakūṭa monuments in Bādāmi, Paṭṭadakkal and Ellōra and in South-East Asia, eg. the temple at Prāmbanam.

The principal forms of Vishnu, in accordance with the iconographic concepts described in the *Saṅgam* literature and the devotional literature of the Alvārs, are found reproduced in sculpture in the cave, monolithic and structural temples of the Pallavas, and the cave and monolithic temples of the Pāṇḍyas, Muttaraiyars and Adigamāns. They are the standing, seated and reclining forms of Vishnu and his other forms as Varāha, Narasimha, Trivikrama, and Harihara. The standing form is found in the Trimūrti cave temple at Māmallapuram, in the cave temple in Kilmāvilāngai and in one of the shrines of the lower cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli to mention a few. It occurs also as exterior sculptures on the walls of the early temples, in many cases, eg. in the Dharmarāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram and in the cave temples in Tirumalaipuram and Ševilippaṭti and on the walls of the structural Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temple in Kāñchi. The seated forms are fewer and occur in the eastern sanctum dedicated to Vishnu in the cave temple in Tirupparankunram, in the central shrine in Kūram Vishnu temple (late Pallava), in the *maṇḍapa* of the Narasimha cave in Nāmakkal, in one of the three panels to the east of the facade of the Tirupparankunram cave temple and on the walls of the Vaikuṇṭhapperumāl in Kāñchi. The reclining forms occupying the principal shrines are many, eg., the shrine between the two Śiva temples in the Shore temple complex at Māmallapuram, in the cave temples in Śingavaram, Malaiyadippaṭti, Tirumeyyam and Tiruttangāl. The classic example is the one on the wall of the *maṇḍapa* of the Mahishāmardini cave temple, Māmallapuram.

Varāha, the principal deity in the Ādivarāha cave temple, even to-day, is a stucco image. This form in stone is found again in the *mandapa* of the Varāha cave temple in the same place, on the east of the facade of the Tirupparankunram cave temple and in the Raṅganātha cave in Nāmakkal. Narasimha was the principal deity in the Mahēndravādi cave temple and perhaps also of the Māmaṇḍūr cave temple I, and is in stone in the cave temple in Śingapperumāl Kōil, as also in the cave temple in Ānamalai (770 A.D.) and in the Narasimha cave temple, Nāmakkal. He is shown again on the panel to the east of the facade of the Tirupparankunram cave temple.

Trivikrama is to be found in the Varāha and Ādivarāha cave temple *maṇḍapas* in Māmallapuram and in the *maṇḍapas* of both the cave temples in Nāmakkal. Varāha, Narasimha and Trivikrama,

besides being some of the earliest *avatāra* concepts, seem to have had an additional significance in connection with the imperial or *chakravarti* concept, for, Varāha would symbolise the redemption of the kingdom from evil, Narasimha, power and might and Trivikrama, conquest of other domains; as would be clear from the similes in royal *praśastis*. As such these have been the favourites of many great dynasties, e.g. the Guptas, Chālukyas and Pallavas. The concept of Harihara, described by the early Alvārs and Nāyanmārs, is amply exemplified in many places, eg., in the Dharmarāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple, Māmallapuram, in Nāmakkal and in other places.

SURYA

That the sun was an object of worship from the early times is to be inferred from such references to its power and worship in the earlier *Śaṅgam*, and post-*Śaṅgam* classics.

*munnīr mīmiśai-p-palar tola-t-tōṇri
ēmura viṭaṅgiya śudariṇum*

(*Narrinai*: 283: 6-7)

*tayaṅgu tirai-p-peruṅkaḍal, ulaku tola-t-tōṇri
vayaṅgu kadir virinda, urukeļu manḍilam*

(*Aham*: 263: 1-2)

*arum tiral kaḍavuḷ ūllūr kuṇā adu
peruṇ kadal mūlkirru āki*

(*Aham*: 90: 9-10)

Nāyiru pōrrudum, Nāyiru pōrrudum

(*Silappadikāram*: 1: 4-6)

ulaku-tolu-manḍilam

(*ibid.* 14: 5)

ulakam uvappa valaṇ ērpu tiri taru

palar pukal Nāyiru.....

(*Pattuppāṭtu-Tirumurugu*: 1-2)

Sculptures of Sūrya are to be found in the early Pallava monuments, eg., in the eastern face of the second *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha, Māmallapuram and further south in the lower rock-cut cave in Tiruchirāpalli. The Kāvēripākkam Sūrya (Madras Museum) is an example of the late Pallava period. A sculpture of

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Sūrya, originally belonging to one of the *parivāra* shrines, of the close of the Pallava period (903 A.D.) is found inside the temple of Viratjanēśvara at Tiruttanī, Chingleput District. His image is often found on the wall niches of structural temples, and in separate shrines forming the *ashtaparivāra* of early Chōla temples as in Tirukkattalai Sundareśvara, and also in Tirupparāyitturai as stated by its inscription.¹¹ The image of Sūryadēva here is mentioned again in other Parakēsari (early Chōla) inscriptions (177 of 1907).¹² Another image in Tirumudukunram (Vridhāchalam) of the time of Parakēsari is mentioned in another inscription.¹³ A temple for Sūrya called Śri Gañdarāditta-Ādittagaram was constructed in the 40th year of Parāntaka I Chōla in Jambai, perhaps as one of the *parivāra* shrines in Nagariśvaram temple there.¹⁴

The Sūrya images of South India, in contrast to the earlier Sūrya images of Northern India lack the *udicyavēsha*, consisting of close fitting garment over the body and top boots of the legs, and are shown bare-footed.

A new feature of the Tāntric worship of Sūrya is found introduced in the time of Rājēndra Chōla I, for in his Gangaikondachōlapuram temple is seen a *Sūrya yantra*, which is in the form of a blooming lotus or *padma* on a square pedestal, with wheels on either side and drawn by seven horses in front. The plinth of the temple, excavated recently, to the north of the main *vimāna* was evidently a Sūrya temple, where this *yantra*, now located in the *mahāmandapa* of the main temple, was perhaps originally installed. A Gahadavāla inscription with an incomplete Gahadavāla *prāstasti*, dated in the 41st year of Kulōttunga Chōla I (1111 A.D.) is an indication of the emphasis given to Sūrya worship in the Tamil country by the association of the Gahadavāla kings with the Chōla capital.¹⁵ This impetus is marked by the construction of the great Sun temple called Kulōttunga Chōla Mārtāndālaya by Kulōttunga I in Sūryanār Kōvil in the Tanjore District, where the god is called Kulōttunga Chōla Mārtānda.¹⁶

11. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1908, No. 258. *South Indian Inscriptions*, VIII, 560.

12. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1907, No. 177.

13. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1908, No. 56.

14. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1937-38, Nos. 443, 442 and 441.

15. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1908, No. 29, Part II, 58-60.

16. *ibid.*, 1927, Nos. 229 and 231.

In this connection it will be remembered that the worship and cult of Sūrya was reestablished in proper form by Śaṅkara in the beginning of the 9th century A.D.

DEVI CULTS

The concept of Durgā as the dweller in the hilly areas is first indicated in her original role as *Korravai* or *Verrimadantai* (Goddess of Victory) with her abode in the Vākai tree in *Padirruppattu* (66) and by *Kuruntokai* (218: 1) where she is called Śūli the wielder of the Śūla (trident) to whom vows are made.

“*vidar-mukai-adukkattu-viral kelu śūlikku
kadānum pūñām*

(Kuruntokai: 218: 1)

And again as *Kān-amar-śelvi*, the great goddess, the denizen of the forest, she is described in *Ahanānūru* (345: 3-7). The *Kādurai Kadavu* of *Porunarārruppādai* (line 52) in the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection, as also the *Tunaṅgaiyañ-celvi* of *Perumbāñ-ārruppādai* (line 459) of the same collection refer to the same goddess, the latter referring to her as one who dances the *tunaṅgai* dance. The *Kalittokai* (89: 8) and *Tolkāppiyam* (*Meyp.*, *Sūtra* 12, *Pēr.*) echo the same sense of the she-devils presuming to teach one or two steps or poses (*nadi*) in dancing to the great goddess. The *Maṇi-mēkalai* (Ch. vi: 50-53) in the story of the *Śakkravāla-k-kōttam*, refers to the temple (*kōttam*) of *Kādamar-Śelvi* (Durgā or Chāṇḍikā) with the sacrificial altar in its front yard and surrounded by tall posts with the severed heads suspended from them.

“*ulaiyā-ullamōdu-uyir-k-kadān-iruttōr
talai tūñgu nedumaram tālndu puram currip-
pōñikai-ōngiya perumbali munrir-k
Kādamar śelvi kali perum kōttamum*

(Mani. vi: 50-53)

The same *Kādamarśelvi* occurs in another context in *Maṇi-mēkalai* (xviii : 115). She is designated as the goddess of war and again as the ancient goddess (*Palaiyōl*) in *Tirumurugārruppādai* (lines 258-59), a much later inclusion forming the invocatory poem of the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection. The *Paripāḍal* collection seems to have had a poem on *Kāḍukāl* according to the later commentaries of Iraiyanār (*Ahapporu*, *Sūtra* 1) and that of Pērāśiriyar (on *Poruḍadikāram*, *Seyyūl*, *Sūtra* 149) of the *Tolkāppiyam*.

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Kāḍukal is said to be the corruption of *Kāḍukilāl*, which again in the commentary of *Takkayāgapparai* (54-urai) is given as *Kānā-nādi* or *Vana-Durgā*. Even in the *Tēvāram* times she is denoted as *Kāḍukal*. The *Manimēkalai* echoes in another context (xx: 115-116) the *Vindhya-vāsinī* concept of Durgā,

*andaram-śelvōr andari irunda
vinda mālvarai mīmīśai-p-pōkār*
(*Mani.*: xx: 115-116)

The *Agama* and *Silpa* texts—the *Vaikhānasa-Āgama* for example, assign to the Durgā figure a place in the *dēvakōshtha* outside the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* of a Saiva temple as *Vindhya-vāsinī*, a feature that becomes common from the close of the 8th century onwards, the corresponding southern niche containing Ganapati. This form of standing Durgā, often on the head of a buffalo (*Mahisha*), is described in *Silappadikāram* (xx, 34-35) as

*adarttu-elu-kurudi adaṅgā-p-paśum-tuṇi-p
piḍar-t-talai-p-pīṭam-ēriya maḍakkodi
verrivel taḍakkai-k-korravai,*

The *Silappadikāram* in the *Vēṭṭuvavari* (Ch. xii) gives a fuller concept both of the cult and iconography of Durgā or *Korravai*¹⁷ in a vivid manner. She is described as having a body, the colour (dark blue) of which resembles that of a flower of the *Kāyā* (*Memecylon edule*), with lips red like the coral, teeth white and the neck dark, with a third eye on the crescent like forehead, holding the discus and conch, sword and *śūla* (spear) and the bow which was the *mēru* (*nedumalai*) strung with the snake *Vāsuki* as its *nān*, wearing the skin of a tiger and a belt (*mēkalai*) of lion's skin, a *kaṭal* (hero's calf-band) on one leg and *śilambu* (woman's anklet) on the other, with the coiffre of *jata* adorned by a serpent and the crescent moon, covering herself with the hide of the elephant as *uttariya* (*ēkāśam*), wearing a snake as her breast band (*kaccu*), carrying a standard of lion (*ālikkodi*). She is said to have fought with the *asuras*, and destroyed Dāruka and Mahishāsura, kicked the *Sakaṭa* and walked over the *Marudam* (*Arjuna*) tree and felled it. She is also said to have assumed legs of wood and fought when the *asuras* assuming the forms of

17. Perhaps the Sanskrit name *Kōṭavi* (or *Kōṭari*) is derived from the Tamil form *Korravai*.

snakes and scorpions, crawled under her feet to torment her. This concept lent the name to the dance pertaining to Durgā—*Marakkäl āṭṭam, Māyaval-ādiya marakkäl ādalum* (*Śilappadikāram*, vii, 59). She is said to have swallowed poison with immunity and described as occupying half the body of the three-eyed Śiva as *mañgai* (*Umā*) (*Śilappadikāram*, xx: 38) and as one (*Bhadrakālī*) who made the *Iraivan* (Śiva) dance (*āḍalkandarulīya anaṅgu*). Thus she combined in her the concepts of Śiva and Vishṇu and Umā and in her attributes the three *guṇas*.

What is most interesting is the attribution of the stag or buck (*kalamān*) as her vehicle, a feature rare in iconographic texts and perhaps peculiar to the Tamil country, and found particularly in the sculptures of the Pallavas and contemporary Pāṇḍyas and other dynasties dating between the second half of the 7th to the close of the 10th centuries A.D. The most noteworthy sculpture showing Durgā on a deer is from the Tanjore district now in the Madras Museum (9th century A.D.). There are references to her mount as the darting deer (*pāy-kalai*) in her descriptions as *Pāy-Kalai-p-pāvai* (line 70); *Kalai-p-pari-ūrdi*, and as one who is mounted on the *kalai* with screwed up black horns (*kariya-tiri-k-kōṭṭu-k-kalai* or *tiri-tari-k-kōṭṭu-k-kalai*). The stag as the mount of Durgā is also mentioned by Sambandar in his *Tēvāram* (2390: 2nd *Tirumurai*, 85th *padikam*, v. 31) as follows:—

...
*Tirumakaḷ Kalaiyadūrdi Seyamādu Bhūmi
 tīśai Deyvamāna palavum, aru nedī nalla nalla,
 avai nalla nalla adiyār avarkku mikavē*

Kamban in his description of the fortification of Ayōdyā (*Bālkāṇḍam*: 3, v. 8) says:

Kāvalin, Kalaiyūr Kanniyai okkum
 attesting to the persistence of this form in still later times.

Her other and more usual mount, the lion, is also mentioned as '*śeṅgan-arimān-śingaviḍai*'. She is described by such names as Amari, Kumari, Gouri, Śamari, Śūli, Nili, Aiya (Āryā), Śeyyaval, Korṛavai, Nallāl, Kannī, Saṅkari etc. She is also said to be *Nānakkolundu*, goddess of higher knowledge (*Aykalai*) and the hidden secret of the *Vēdas*, and in another context *Māyaval* (*Śilappadikāram*, vi: 59) pointing to the beginnings of the concept of the Dēvi being both *Vidyā-sakti* (supreme knowledge) and *Māyā-sakti* (nescience).

As has been said before, she was considered to be the younger sister of *Māl* (Vishṇu) and called *Mālavar-k-kilaṅgilai* in *Silappadikāram* (vi. 59). In this context the close association of Anantaśāyi Vishṇu with Durgā, in many cave and structural temples of the Tamil country dating from the middle of the seventh to the ninth centuries is significant. The famous combination of Anantaśāyin and Mahishamardini sculptures in the Mahishamardini cave temple at Māmallapuram is an outstanding example. In the same place just to the south of the rock-cut Anantaśāyin, sculptured on top of a low outcrop, between the eastern and western Śiva shrines of the Shore temple complex, is another Durgā sculpture inside the niche cut into the chest of a seated lion, sculptured in the round and squatting on a pedestal cut out of the same rock as the one containing Anantaśāyin. In addition, just to its north, and between it and the reclining Vishṇu is a recumbent stag, Durgā's other mount, in the characteristic sleeping pose of the caprines, with its head thrown back beside its body. In the Śingavaram cave temple, dedicated to Anantaśāyin, there is a niche with a beautiful Durgā on the flank of the rock next to the facade. Far south in the Pāṇḍya country at Tiruttangāl is a cave temple dedicated to Anantaśāyin and round the rock on the south is a similar niche containing Durgā. At Malaiyadippatti in the former Pudukkōṭṭai State (now in Tiruchirāpalli District) the rock wall of the Śiva cave temple adjoining the Anantaśāyin cave temple contains a Mahishamardini scene, like the one in the Mahishamardini cave at Māmallapuram. These cannot be dismissed as mere coincidences, and, considered in the context of the first mention of the relationship of Vishṇu and Durgā in the *Silappadikāram*, would indicate the contemporaneity of the epic with this period.

Again in the same work, (xx: 37) she is referred to as "the one that comes after the six", viz., Chāmuṇḍā (Piḍāri) who comes last in the series after the six mātrikās in the Saptamātrikā groups.

"*aruvarkkku-ilaiya-naṅgai*".

SAPTAMATRIKAS

This indirectly presupposes a cult of Mātriganas or the Saptamātrikās. These are significantly absent in the cave temples or monoliths of the Pallavas in the Tonḍaimandalam dating between 600 and 700 A.D. They are found for the first time in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchī, built by Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.) and that too in the cloister built by his son Mahēndraavarman III and, as

such, would not date earlier than 720 A.D. In the cave temples of the Muttaraiyars who were occupying the Chōla country, and of the Pāṇḍyas, belonging to the 8th century and later, they are found either as a part of the cave temple or in association with them. Such cave temples are the Śiva cave temple in Tirugō-karṇam and that in Malaiyadippatti excavated by a Muttaraiya in the 16th year of Dantivarman Pallava (812 A.D.), both in the Pudukkōṭṭai area (Tiruchirāpalli District). Kunnattūr in Madurai District and Tirukkalākkuḍi in the Rāmanāthapuram District.

A separate temple was built and dedicated to the Saptamāṭrikās in the time of Dantivarman Pallava (796-846 A.D.) at Alambakkam in the Tiruchirāpalli District and the place is called Dantivarmachaturvēdimaṅgalam in one of its early inscriptions,¹⁸ of the time of the early Chōla Rājakēsari (Āditya I). That there was a temple of the Saptamāṭrikās in Vēlāchēri, Chingleput District in the middle of the 10th century A.D. is clear from an inscription¹⁹ of Pārthivēndravarman referring to gifts to such a temple. The last of the Pallava series of the 10th century A.D. is to be found in the Virattānēśvara temple (all-stone) at Tiruttani, Chingleput District built at the close of the reign of Aparājita Pallava (903 A.D.). This particular group of Saptamāṭrikās is interesting in that each of the māṭrikās has her respective mount shown as her *lāñchana* in front of the pedestal, a feature unusual in the Tamil country, but characteristic of the Chālukyan area. The Saptamāṭrikās are to be found in the structural temples of the Pallava-Chōla transition period and in all early Chōla temples up to the time of Rājēndra Chōla II, or till the close of the 11th century A.D. or later. In these early Chōla temples, particularly in those having the *ashtaparivāra* shrines, they have a separate shrine, a rectangular *āyatāśra* one on the southern side of the *pradakṣiṇa*. In all the Saptamāṭrikā groups, the constituents are Brāhmī, Māheśvari, Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Chāmuṇḍā, with Viṇādhara Śiva (Dakṣināmūrti) often taking the place of Virabhadra at the beginning of the series as the guardian deity and Gaṇeśa always at the end of the series.

The restriction of the list of *Mātriganas* to seven goddesses points to a date after the *Bṛihatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira (550

18. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1909, No. 705.

19. *Annual Report South Indian Epigraphy*, 1911, No. 316; *South Indian Inscriptions* III, 191.

A.D.) which is silent about the numbers. Even in the *Mārkandēya purāṇa* (Ch. 88), the number and iconography or forms of the māṭrikās or śaktis are undefined and varying. Their number is definitely restricted to seven in the familiar early Chālukyan *praśastis* (*Hāritīputrāñām sapta māṭṛbhīrabhīvardhitāñām*, etc.). It would appear that this cult with a fixed number and definite iconography, as found in the early Chālukyan examples, migrated from the Chālukyan country to Orissa on the north-east and the Pāṇḍya and Pallava countries in the south and east of their territories. The cult seems to have lost its prominence in the Tamil country after the close of the 11th century. The last inscription in the Saptamāṭrikā temple, called Śelliyanmaṇ temple, at Ālambakkam, referred to above, is of the 31st year of Chōla Rājādhirāja dēva I (1049-50 A.D.) mentioning endowments to the temple of Saptamāṭrikās for the conduct of their worship.²⁰ If the evidence of the sculptures is any indication, this would again point to a date later than the 7th century for the *Silappadikāram*, the earliest Tamil work to mention the *Saptamāṭrikās* in association with Durgā (Chāmuṇḍā or Mahishamardini).

JYESHTHA

The cult of Jyēshṭhā seems to have had almost a parallel existence in the Tamil country. Though the worship of Jyēshṭhā seems to have been peculiar to the south, she is not seen either in the earlier Pallava cave temples or *rathas* or in association with them. But she is seen for the first time in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchi (730 A.D.) and subsequently in the other Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Chōla temples, all over the Tamil country till the close of the 11th century A.D.

In Tirupparankunram near Madurai two inscriptions in Sanskrit and Tamil in the cave temple on the northern side of the hill, now called the Subrahmanya temple, refer to the excavation of the cave temple by Śattan Gaṇavati, the minister of the Pāṇḍya Māraṇ Śādaiyan; and the relevant Tamil inscription also mentions that his wife added to it a shrine for Durgā and excavated another cave temple near it for Jyēshṭhā in the year 773 A.D. Gopinatha Rao²¹ who has not seen this cave temple, which can be approached only through a tunnel in the later masonry of the *mandapa*,

20. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1909, No. 700.

21. *Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, pp. 391-93.

wrongly supposes that the present image worshipped as Subrahmanyā was originally the Jyēshṭhā referred to. The *ashṭaparivāra* shrines in the early Chōla temples included one for Jyēshṭhā with another for the Saptamātriķas as in Tirukkaṭṭalai (Pudukkōṭṭai). A Chōla inscription from Tirupparāyitturai (Tiruchirāpalli)²² enumerates the *ashṭaparivāra* including Jyēshṭhā—called Tiruk-kēṭṭai-k-kilatti, as also the inscription at Erumbūr²³ of the 27th year of Rājēndra I. She is mentioned for the first time in Tamil literature in the Vaishṇava hymns called *Nālāyira-Divya Prabandham*, by one of the early Ālvars, Tonḍar-adi-p-podi:

Nāṭṭināñ deyvam engum; nalladu ḥr aruḷ tannālē
kāttināñ tiruvaraṅgam, uypavarckku uyyum vanṇam
kēṭtirē nambi mīrkāl Gerudavāhananum nirka-c
Cēṭṭai tan madi yakattu-c-celvam pārttu irukkinṛirē

*(Divya Prabandham, 880); Tonḍaradippodi,
Tirumālai 10).*

The Ālvār's reference in derision to the foolish worship of Jyēshṭhā by people in the vain hope of acquiring the fulfilment of their desires, while there was the great God Vishṇu, the conferer of all boons, whom they forgot altogether, speaks of the great popularity of this cult. We can place Tonḍar-adi-p-podi or Vipra Nārāyaṇa round about 850 A.D.²⁴

That she was the goddess of evil and was propitiated for warding off evil will be clear from a stray verse in the *Nandi-k-kalam-bakam* where she is said to be the elder sister (*Jyēshṭhā*) of Lakṣmī.

‘Seyya kamala-t-tiruvukku munpiranda, taiyal uravu
tavirttōmē.’

22. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. VIII, No. 560.

23. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy*, 1919, No. 318.

24. Tonḍaradippodi's *Tiruppalliyelucci* is earlier than the *Tiruppalliyelucci* of Māṇikkavācakar and his *Tirumālai*; later than Appar, since its very form is moulded after Appar's *Tirunēriśai*, and the second half of *Tirumālai* 34 is almost identical (except for insignificant variations) with that of Appar IV: 75; 3. The second half of *Tirumālai* 17 is also identical with the last two lines of the *Tiru-k-kunrun-tāṇḍakam* 13 of Appar. This would place the *Tirumālai* in the second half of the 9th century A.D. Vaiyapuri Pillai-History of Tamil Language and Literature, Madras (1956), pp. 121-22.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Bōdhāyana-*Gṛihya-Sūtra* contains a chapter dealing with the worship of Jyēshṭhā, and the *Vishṇudharmottara* mentions eight kinds of Jyēshṭhā images. Perhaps here we have an indication of the date of these two works also. The *Sēndan Divakaram*, the earliest *Nigaṇḍu* or lexicon in Tamil, of the 10th century A.D.²⁵ mentions the Tamil names of Jyēshṭhā, eight in number as follows:—

Mugadi, Thauvai, Kalati, Mūdēvi, Kākkai-k-Koḍiyāl (one with the crow as banner), *Kaḷudai vāhani* (She of the donkey mount), *Sēṭṭai* (Jyēshṭhā) and *Kedalaṇaṅgu* (Alakshmī or goddess of evil).

Though the worship of Jyēshṭhā has been discontinued long ago, and the Jyēshṭhā idols in the early temples are now found cast off or relegated to an obscure corner, a faint echo of people seeking prosperity from the ‘lap of Jyēshṭhā’ as Tonḍaradippodi says in his hymn, is to be found even to-day in an unusual practice obtaining in the Kāmākshī temple at Kāñchipuram. The *Kumkuma* (saffron powder) *prasādam* of Kāmākshī is not to be straightaway worn on the forehead, as in all the other temples, but has to be taken back and worn only after throwing it on the lap of a Jyēshṭhā image installed in a niche in the north wall of the *garbhagriha*, disfigured though by a vertical groove cut from the face down to the folded legs.

Thus among the Dēvis, Durgā seems to have held a high place and special shrines were dedicated to her as could be seen from the literary references quoted. The cave temple called Kōti-kal maṇḍapa and the Draupadi ratha in Māmallapuram are the earliest extant examples (640-700 A.D.). A natural gorge in Paṇamalai, serving as a shrine of Durgā as Simhavāhani, one of the earliest specimens of the kind, was consecrated by Rājasimha Pallava (700-730 A.D.) as his inscription there would indicate.²⁶ Another specimen from Kāndiyūr, Viratṭāṇeśvara is a fine sculpture belonging to the early tenth century.²⁷ Reference has already been made to

25. *Vaiyapuri Pillai*, *Ibid*, pp. 164-65. The worship of Jyēshṭhā of the universe in visible form” and as the presiding deity of Kukkanūru is described in Kalachuri Singhana’s copper-plate dated 1183 A.D. from Ittagi, Raichur District (*Annual Report, Indian Epigraphy*, 1953-54, No. 12 of App. A. and p. 2; *Indian Antiquary* Vol. IV, 274 ff.)

26. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, no. 31.

27. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956-57, p. 41-43.

the addition of a Durgā shrine in the Tirupparanikunram cave temple by the wife of Śāttan Gaṇavati, the Pāṇḍya minister in 773 A.D. along with a separate excavation for Jyēshṭhā. According to the Tiruvālaṅgādu plates²⁸ Vijayālaya, the first of the Imperial Chōla line, erected a shrine for Niśumbhasūdīnī (Durgā) in his capital city at Tanjore, which he founded in about 850 A.D. The sculpture shows Durgā seated, with one of the two demons, (Śumbha and Niśumbha) lying prostrate in front of the pedestal and the other being trampled by the left leg of the goddess.²⁹

NAVAKANDAM AND HEAD OFFERING TO DURGA

But the more ubiquitous form is that of Durga standing over the severed head of a buffalo, or a *padmapīṭha*. In some Durgā panels of this period may be seen a devotee offering his own head by cutting it off at the neck or making a part offering by cutting his left wrist, while another devotee on the other side sits adoring. On top are also shown flying attendants, flanked at the corners by a lion and stag, the two mounts of Durgā already mentioned. In one of them by the side of Durgā is also a *dhvajastambha* with a śūla ensign on top. Such panels are found in the Varāha cave temple and the Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram and on the rock face adjoining the facade of the Pallava rock-cut cave temple in Śiṅgavaram in the Pallava country of Tonḍaimandalam, in the lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli in the territory of the Muttaraiyars who were then in possession of this part of the Chōla country, in the Pallava-chōla transition temples in Puñjai (Nanippalli of the Tēvāram) and Pullamangai, Tanjore District, in the Durgā shrine at the centre of the *mandapa* in the Pāṇḍya cave temple at Tirupparanikunram, and near the Anantaśāyi cave temple at Tiruttāngāl in the Pāṇḍya country.

An inscribed slab³⁰ in the Subramanya temple in Mallam (Gūdūr Taluk, Nellore) dated in the 20th year of Kampavarman Pallava (968 A.D.) contains a sculpture of a decapitated man, his right hand holding a sword and the left holding his own severed head by its locks. The inscription refers to him as Okkandanāgan Okkatindan Paṭṭi Pōttan and that he severed his own head as the

28. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, no. 205.

29. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956-57, pp. 41-43.

30. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. XII, no. 106.

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final offering and placed it on the altar, after offering *navakanḍam*, i.e., flesh from nine parts of his body; and an endowment of lands was made to his relative Paṭṭai Pōttan, in recognition of the act and a stone monument (*Kalnādu* — perhaps the inscribed *naḍukal* itself) was erected as a memorial.

*Okkondan nāgan Okkatindan Paṭṭai Pōttan
mētavam purinda denru bhaṭārikku
nava kaṇḍan kuḍuttu kuṇraka-t-talai
aruttu pīdilikai mēl vaittā nukku
Tiruvānmūr ūrār vaitta parisā-vadu.*

There are similar slabs depicting head offering in the Madras Museum collection, and some slabs of this type are found also in the vicinity of the Tiruvorriyūr temple.

For one who reads the elaborate descriptions of this act of head offering to Durgā and the worship of Durgā by the warriors (Maravar or Eynar or Mallar) as a prize for the victory vouch-safed by the goddess (*kaḍan*-iruttal or *sūrttal*) in the *Vēṭṭuvavari* and *Indravilavūr edutta kāthai* of *Silappadikāram* (xx, and v. 11, 75-90) these would strike as exact sculptural representations of the poetic descriptions. This kind of vow was taken by the warrior class when they desired victory for their king in battles or even in their cattle raiding expeditions and hunts. The goddess is believed to have gone always in front of them assuring protection and victory. Along with the many instances cited above, this would also go to confirm the contemporaneity of the literary versions supplied by the *Manimekalai* and *Silappadikāram* with the earlier at least of the sculptural depictions. Such head offerings are described again in the *Kalingattupparani* (*Kōyil* 21) and in the Sanskrit work *Daśakumāra-Carita* in the narration of the *Śaiva Vrittānta* of Upākaravarma. The *Kālikā purāṇa* (Ch. 70) describes also the rituals connected with such human sacrifices. Among the sculpture panels referred to, those depicting the cutting of the left wrist by the devotee would perhaps represent the first stage of the *navakanḍam* offering and those depicting decapitation, the final phase of the act, called in the inscription *mē tavam* (highest penance).

SIVA-SAKTI AND VAISHNAVI—ARDHANARI AND HARIHARA

The concept of Durgā was more Śaivite even in the *Silappadikāram*. Her Vaishnavite attributes, viz., conch and discus, and the complexion apart, she is described as having the *jata* secured

by the serpent, and adorned by the crescent moon, the serpent again as her ornament, the tiger skin garment, the blackened neck resulting from the swallowing of the poison, from the effects of which, however, she was immune, and most of all, her sharing the body with the three-eyed god Śiva.

“*Kannudal-pāka-māludaiyāl*”; “*Kannudalōñ pākattu mangai*”

(*Silappadikāram*: 22)

She is also called *Kanni*, *Śaṅkarī* and *Gouri*. Here we have the suggestion of the Śakti concept, with the Ardhanārī concept combined, in addition to her equation with Vishṇu as Śiva's half, as conceived by Appar in the *Tēvāram* (4556—*Tirumurai*, iv, decad 10, v. No. 5—*Tiruvaiyāru*).

“*ari-yalāl-dēvi-illai-Aiyan-Aiyāraṇārkke*”

The Ardhanārī concept is referred to in other contexts in the *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* (e.g., Sambandar, *Tēvāram* 2388 and 3937; Appar 4789 and 6717 and Māṇikkavācakar, *Tiruvācakam*, 456).

The *Prabandhams* also refer to the Harihara concept (eg. Pēyālvār, *pāśuram* 2344). The equation of Harihara with Ardhanārī, emphasising the benign forms of Śakti combining the three *guṇas*, finds a development in the Lalitā cult, which became a special feature of the South. This would also reflect the Śiva-Śakti concept where the Śakti, if feminine is Durgā and if masculine Vishṇu.

The earliest Pallava Ardhanārī is found on the Dharmarāja ratha, where the Pārvatī half too has two hands like the Śiva half. The other Pallava Ardhanārīs are one in Kāñchipuram, and another from Māmallapuram now in the Madras Museum. In the early Chōla temples from about the time of Aditya I the Ardhanārī form replaces the Vishṇu sculpture in the niche on the hind wall of the sanctum of a Śiva temple, as for example the unique seated form in the Kāndiyūr temple³¹ and the standing forms in the Nāgēśvara temple in Kumbakonam and in the Müvarkōil, Kodum-bālūr, and though this gave place to the Lingōdbhava or An̄māmalaiyār form, in many instances, it persisted till about the 13th

31. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58, pp. 80-83.

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century, for in the back wall of the sanctum of the Jambukēśvara temple in Nārttāmalai, built in 1205 A.D., we find an Ardhanārī.³² However Ardhanārī forms are found in other places on the sanctum wall as in the great temples of Tanjore and Gaṅgaikondachōlapuram. The earliest Harihara forms are found in the Dharmarāja ratha and Ādivarāha cave temple in Māmallapuram, in the cave temple No. 3 at Kunñakkuḍi, in the Mūvarkōil and in the temples of Tanjore and Gaṅgaikondachōlapuram. Sometimes the place of Viṣṇu on the back wall of the sanctum of a Śiva temple is taken by Harihara.

As we have seen, the worship of the Mātrikās, Jyēshṭhā, etc., continued till about the close of the 11th century A.D., even after the influence of the *bhakti* movements of the Nāyanmārs and Ālvārs, of whom one has strongly criticised the worship of Jyēshṭhā, and the reformation brought about in the worship of Śakti by Saṅkara, in the first half of the 9th century A.D. In the early Chōla times, such goddesses as Durgā, under the names Kālapiḍārī, Durgā Paramēśvarī, Ēmaļattu Durgaiyār Ōmkāra Sundarī and Piḍārī and others such as Śribhaṭṭārakī, Sarasvatī, Mahāmōdi, Saptamāṭkā and Śeṭṭaiyar (Jyēshṭhā) continued in worship as evidenced by the inscriptions (*vide* Sastri: Cōlas, p. 646). The shrines of Durgā, referred to as *mūrīl* in *Śilappadikāram* are called *Tirumur̄ram* or *Sattimur̄ram*, as distinguished from the Śri Kōyil of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

KAMA-K-KOTTAM-LALITA CULT

It was only from the time of Rājēndra Chōla I, in the second quarter of the 11th century, as I have discussed elsewhere³³ that Amman shrines, popularly so called and forming separate shrines for *dēvīs*, were built. This constitutes a characteristic feature of the Tamilian temples, not found elsewhere. Such are called *Tirukkāmak-kōṭtam*, and they formed an important unit of the temple complex built from this time onwards, and were further added to the pre-existing temples which did not possess them in their original composition, as for instance the Great Temples in Tanjore and Gaṅgaikondachōlapuram. Thus each temple, whether Śiva or Viṣṇu, came to have a shrine for the *dēvī* with the name appro-

32. *Manual of the Pudukkotai State* II, ii, p. 1078.

33. *Tirukkāmakōṭtam*—*Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference*, 1946,

priate to that of the principal deity, *viz.*, Bṛhadīśvara or Peruvuḍaiyār and Bṛihannāyakī or Periyanāyaki, Raṅganātha and Raṅganāyakī, Sundarēśvara and Minākshī, Ēkāmrēśvara and Kāmākshī. Such combinations familiar to every one can be quoted in thousands from all over the Tamil country and Kerala or wherever the Tamils built a temple complex after the middle of the 12th century. The example of the modern Viśālākshī temple in Kāśi (Vāraṇāśi) is the most outstanding.

The name *kāmak-k-kōṭṭam* for the *dēvī* shrine was evidently after the name of the most important shrine or seat of the *dēvī* or *dēvī* cult in Kāñchipuram, where she is called Kāmākshī. The installation of the Śricakra here by Śaṅkara, made this place an important Śaktipūṭha even as was the case of Kashmir and some other places in India. The earliest epigraphical reference to Kāmakōṭi of Kāñchī, so far known, is the undated inscription from Gōṭlagatṭu in Nellore District³⁴ and another dated 1259 A.D. from Tripurāntakam in the Kurnool District,³⁵ both mentioning a chief, Pallava-Irumaḍi Bāsava Śaṅkara Allāḍa Prēmaya Dēva, lord of Kāñcipura, a devotee of Kāmakōtyāmbikā and the recipient of many boons from her. The Tripurāntakam temple itself was built in 1255 A.D. under the orders of Kākatīya Gaṇapati. Among the Kāmākshī temples in the other parts of the Tamil country, which derived their names in imitation of the one in Kāñchī, the earliest one in Dharmapuri, Salem District, is as old as the 11th century A.D.³⁶ This will take the antiquity of the Kāmākshī temple in Kāñchī to a period earlier than the 11th century, though the present structure or its inscriptions do not date earlier than the 14th century A.D. The find of many Buddhist sculptures in the temple precincts and the presence of a Jaina *mānastambha*, sticking out from the roof of the entrance *maṇḍapa* of the inner enclosure makes us look for the original site of the temple elsewhere in Kāñchī. The three Nāyanmārs, Appar, Sundarar and Sambandar refer to the Kāmakōṭṭam and to Kāmakkodi as follows:—

Elunda tirai nadi-t-tivalai nanainda tiṅgal iḷanilā-t-tikal-
kiṇṭra valar śadaiyanē, kolum-pavaḷa-c-ceṅgani vāy-k-
kāmakkōṭti koṅgai-iṇai amarporudu kōlaṅkonḍa,
taḷum-buḷavē, varaimār-pil venṇū-luṇḍē, sānda moḍu sa-

34. Nellore Inscriptions No. 16.

35. Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1905, no. 217.

36. Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1901, no. 307.

*ndanattin alaru taṅgi, alundiya śen tiru vuruvilven-
nīrānē, avanākil Adigai Vīraṭṭānamē*

(Appar-Tēvāram 6285; 6th Tirumurai, 4th decad,
verse 10).

*Nacci-t-toluvīrkāl namakku-idu śollir
kacci-p-poli Kāmakoḍiyuḍan kūḍi
iccit-t-irumbūlai-idañ-konḍa Īśan
uccit-t-talaiyir, baḍikondu-la-lūnē*

(Sambandar, Tēvāram 1855, 2nd Tirumurai 36th
decad, v. 4)

*Vāriruñ-kulal vāñedūñkañ malaimakał madu vimmu
koṇrai-t, tār-iruntadāmārpu nīngāt-t-Taiyalāl
ulakuyyavaitta,
kār irum polir kacci mūdūr Kāmakōṭtam uṇḍāka nīr pōy
ūridūm piccai kol vadu enñe Ōṇa kāndanṛalīyulīrē*

(Sundarar, Tēvāram 7271; 7th Tirumurai,
5th decad, v. 6).

While the first is a reference to the incident in the Puranic story of Umā (Kāmakkodi or Kāmalatā) embracing Śiva (Kamba or the support for the creeper) and leaving the marks of her breasts on the chest of Śiva, the two others are in the nature of a *nindā-stuti* asking Śiva why he should go about begging in the streets, when the Kāmakkodi had come to keep house for him in the Kāmakkōṭtam. Kamakkodi is taken to be the same as Kāmākshī or Kāmakkanñi. A *Saṅgam* poetess of Madurai, bearing the name Kāma-k-kañni is the author of *Narrinai* 243 and the appellation would indicate the antiquity of this name. This, like Kayarkanni (Minākshī), was perhaps in ancient times the name of the patron deity of the place, even as Campā was of Puhār, Mahālakshmī of Kolhapur, Kālī of Kālīghāt and Mahākālī of Ujjayini. Kanni may also be interpreted in the sense of a pair or couple (*mithuna*), as it is used to denote a couplet or distich (as suggested by her other name Kannī in *Maṇimēkalai* 22:27), in poetry and the pair of opposed flowers forming a unit in a plaited garland. If it be so, Kāma-kañni would mean the loving pair and Kayarkanni, the *mīna-mithuna*, an ancient auspicious motif. The idea of the patron deity is emphasised by a quotation of the commentator of *Śilappadikāram*, v. 11. 95-98:—

*Kacci-vaṭai-k-kaicci Kāma Kōṭtam-Kāval
mecci-iṇidu-irukkum-mey-c-Cāttan kai-c-ceṇdu*

Evidently she was worshipped as a form of Durgā and a temple called Ādi-pīṭhā Paramēśvarī temple, in the vicinity of the modern temple of Kāmākshī, containing a very old seated four-armed sculpture with three human heads on the pedestal, was perhaps the original site where the Śaktipīṭha was installed, after the reformation of the worship by Śaṅkara.

GANESA

The cult of Gaṇeśa, who forms a component of the Saptamāṭrikā series, often found included along with Jyēshṭhā (as on either side of the facades of the two cave temples in Vallam of a later date) is not referred to in the *Saṅgam* classics. He is singularly absent as a contemporary sculpture in the earlier Pallava cave temples and *rathas* till the time of Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.) and even then towards the close of his period, whereas he is to be seen in contemporary Chālukyan sculpture.

In the Rāmānuja maṇḍapa cave temple in Māmallapuram, which according to its inscription was excavated by Paramēśvara-varman I, and dedicated to Śiva primarily, though the other two shrine cells, all now destroyed, could have been meant for Brahmā and Viṣṇu, is an interesting *bhūtavari*. It is a frieze of *bhūtas* and *gaṇas* over the beam of the facade and below the overhanging cornice or *kapōta*. Of the twenty-seven *bhūtagaṇas* in the frieze, the central one is a pot-bellied *Kumbhōdara* and while twelve on either side of him carry over their shoulders two enormous garlands, a familiar motif in the earlier Buddhist *stūpas* of the Andhra country, the two extreme *bhūtas*, one at either end, are reclining and supporting the *kapōta*. Of these, the seventh *gana* from the south has the head of an elephant over a human body suggesting that he was only one among the anthropomorphic or therianthropic *gaṇas* or *bhūtas* comprising such friezes and not a god of importance, having a special place in the pantheon installed in temple shrines. This is perhaps the earliest representation of the form in Pallava times. The same is again found as an ornament of the *kuḍu* arches in the earlier structural temples of Rājasimha, eg. in the Shore temple, and not even in a niche or *devakōshṭha* on any of their walls.

In all Pallava sculpture in Tondaimaṇḍalam, he is shown for the first time occupying a place of importance, as a recognised cult deity at the end of the Saptamāṭrikā series, in one of the cloister shrines of the Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchi, the latest of Rāja-

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simha's temples, while he forms a small *tōraṇa* crest over the niches on the walls of the main *vimāna*. He is found in the later structural temples of the Pallavas, eg. Mātaṅgēśvara in Kāñchī and Viraṭtānēśvara in Tiruttāṇi. Gaṇeśa again occurs as a constituent of the cave temples, of the Pāṇḍyas and Muttaraiyars in the farther south, again dating after 700 A.D. He is found mostly in his *valampuri* form, with his trunk coiled to his right, on the side wall or hind wall of the *ardhamandapa* of these cave temples, as in Tirugōkārṇam, Malayakkōvil, Kunñāndārkōil, all in the Pudukkōṭṭai area of the Tiruchirāpalli District, in the lower cave temple at Tiruchirāpalli and the Siva cave-temple in Tiruveṭṭarai in the same district. Further south, in the Pāṇḍya country, he is seen in the cave temples in Kunṛakkuḍi, Pillaiyārpatti, Tirupparanikunṛam (northern or Subrahmaṇya cave), Ševilippaṭti, Tirumalāpuram, Kunñattur (Nilakanṭhēśvara) etc., and on the flank of the facade, in the cave temples in Vallam, Kuḍumiyyāmalai, Dēvarmalai, Tirukkalākkudi etc.

This would indicate the popularity of this cult in the Tamil country soon after 700 A.D. which was its probable date of advent from the Chālukyan area, along with cults like the Saptamāṭrikā, represented earlier in that region. The absence of any marked variety as described in *Śilpa* and *Āgamic* works in the iconographic forms of the examples cited, except one example of a standing form as in the lower cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli, while all the others are sitting, would also indicate that it was not a cult which had entered earlier and had been undergoing development, marked by local characteristics, except the *valampuri* form, as in the case of other cults discussed above.

In structural temples of the Pallava-Chōla transition and in early Chōla temples as in Tirukkaṭṭalai, Tiruppalātturai, Erumbūr, Kaliyāppaṭti, Paṇaṅguḍi, and Vijayālaya Chōlisvaram, the first among the *ashṭaparivāra* shrines round the central *vimāna* is a Gaṇapati shrine. In the larger temples of the later Pallavas and early Chōlas and thereafter, he always comes to occupy the southern *devakōshtha* or niche of the *ardhamandapa*, while the corresponding northern one contained a standing Durga, as in the Mukteśvara, Iravātanēśvara and Tripurāntakeśvara in Kāñchī-puram and the Viraṭtānēśvara in Tiruttāṇi among the Pallava series ending with the tenth century A.D. The cult has spread so much that Gaṇeśa today is one of the most popular and important deities found everywhere, in larger temples as one among

the many subsidiary deities, but also as the presiding deity in individual shrines as well as under tree shades, tank bunds and river banks.

In this context of the appearance of the Gaṇapati sculptures after 700 A.D. are to be viewed the references, (about ten in number), to Gaṇeśa in the *Tēvāram* collection. They are:

- (1) *pala pala kāmattarāki padai-t-teluvār mana-t-tullē kalamalakkittu-t-tiriyum Gaṇapati ennum kaṭirum*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 4173; 4th *Tirumurai*, 2nd *padikam*, v. 5, lines 1-2 Tiru Adigai vīraṭṭānam).
- (2) *Nāraṇan-oḍu-Nāmukan Indiran Vāraṇan Kumaran vananigum kaṭar Pūraṇan*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 5889; 5th *Tirumurai*, 65th *padikam*, v. 10, lines 1-3. Tiruppūvanūr).
- (3) *Kai-vēlamukattavanai-p-paṭaittār pōlum Gayāsuranai avanār kolvittār pōlum*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 6776; 6th *Tirumurai*, 53rd *padikam*, v. 4, lines 1-2; Tiruviḷimilalai).
- (4) *Melliyalum Viṇāyakaṇum tōṇrakkanḍēn*
(Appar: *Tēvāram* 7015; 6th *Tirumurai*, 77th *padikam*, line 3; Tiruvāymūr).
- (5) *sandanān malar anī tāl śadaiyan tarta madattavaṇ tādai yū tān*
(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1239; 1st *Tirumurai* 115th *padikam*, v. 2 lines 1-2; Tiru Irāmanadiccuram).
- (6) *neruppuru veṭ viḍai mēṇiyarēruvar nerriyin kaṇ maruppuru van kanṇar tātai yai-k-kāṭṭuvār mā Murugan viruppuru pāmbukku mey-t-tandaiyār virāl māṭavarvāl poruppuru mālikai-t-teṇ pura vat-t-anī puṇṇiyāṇē*
(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1266; 1st *Tirumurai*, 117th *padikam*, v. 8 lines 1-4. Tirup-pairama puram)
- (7) *pidi yadaṇ uru vumai koṭa miku kariyadu vadī kodu tāṇa daḍi valipāḍu mavar iḍar*

The fourth line here suggests the installation of Gaṇeśa on the south wall niche of the *ardhamāṇḍapa* as a custom contemporary with Sambandar and incidentally indicate his date as about 730 A.D.

*kađi Gañapati vara varuļinān miku kodai
vađi viñar payil vali vala murai yiraiyē*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram* 1330; 1st *Tirumurai*, 123rd *padikam*, v. 5, lines 1-4 *Tiruvalivalam*).

(8) *Serrittē verriccēr tikalnda tumbi moymburuñ
cērē vārā nūl kōdai-t-teriyilai padi yaduvāy
Orraiccer murraç kombudai-t-tađakkai mukkan̄ mik-
kōvādē pāymātānatturu pukar muka viraiyai-p-
Perrittē marrippār poruttu mikka dukkamum
pērā nōy tāmē yāmaippirivu śeydavañadiñ
Karrittē yett-eṭtu-k-kalai-t-turai-k-karai-c-celak
kānādārēśērā mey-k-kalumala valanagarē*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram*, 1364; 1st *Tirumurai*, 126th *padikam*, v. 6. *Tirukkalumalam*).

(9) *Kariyin māmuka mudaiya Gañapati tātai pal-pūdam
Tiriya il bali-k-kēkuñ celuñjudar sērtaru mūdūr*

(Sambandar: *Tēvāram*, 2509; 2nd *Tirumurai*, 29th *padikam*, v. 3, lines 1-2 *Śirkāli*)

(10) *manṇulakum viñṇulakum ummadē ātchi
malaiyaraïyan porpāvai Śiruvanaiyum tērēn
enniliyūn peruvayiran Ganapati-yonrariyān
emberumān idu takavō-viyambi aruļ śeyyir*

(Sundarar: *Tēvāram*, 7699; 7th *Tirumurai*, 46th *padikam*, v. 9 lines 1-4 *Tirunāgai-k-kārōñam*).

The *Paripādal* in its description of the different forms and names of Vishnu and his identity with other gods, calls him as *Aīngai-m-mainda*—the son with five hands—perhaps Gañapati (3: 37), in which case, the late date of the *Paripādal* collection will also be indicated.

These references from the *Tēvāram* would show that the concept of Gañapati in its developed stage was known to the three Nāyanmārs, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar. Sundarar, at any rate, is believed to have lived sufficiently later than 730 A.D. But the date of the two earlier saints, has been largely derived from the supposed identity of Guṇadhara of the later *Periyapurāṇam* tradition with Guṇabhara, the surname of Mahendra Pallava I, and hence their contemporaneity with that king. This would be much earlier than the date afforded by sculptural evidence. In this connection one has to remember also the other *Periyapurāṇam* tradi-

dition of the identification of Śiruttōṇḍanāyanār, with Parañjōti, who is again believed to have been the general of the Pallava (Narasiṁhavarman Māmalla, and to have taken part in the Vātāpi invasion. The contemporaneity of Śiruttōṇḍar and Sambandar is believed to be suggested by the *palaśruti* afforded by *Tēvāram* 3480 (3rd *Tirumurai*, 63rd *padikam*, v. 10—Tiruchengatāṅgudi).

*Sendaṇ pūmpuṇal paranda Šeṅgāṭṭāṅguḍimēya
Venda nīr-ani māṛpan Śiruttōṇḍan vēṇda
Andan pūm kali-k-kālī yaḍikalaiyē-yadi paravum
Sandam kol Šambandan tamil uraippōr takkōrē*

There is also another tradition of the meeting of Sambandar and Tirumaṅgi Aḻvār embodied in two old stray verses (599, 600 of the *Peruntokai* collection by M. Raghava Iyengar), each purporting to be sung by one in praise of the other. The same is to be found in the *Divya-Sūri-charitam* and *Guruparamparābhāvam* of the Vaishṇavas.

The *Tēvāram* hymns cited, clearly show that Ganapati was not only firmly incorporated into the pantheon, but also his filial relationship to Śiva was known by the time the hymns were sung. While Appar in his *Tēvāram* hymn 5889 mentions Gaṇēśa as having worshipped Śiva, along with Vishṇu, Brahmā, Indra, and Kumāra, he calls Śiva the father of Ārumugan and Āṇaimugan in his verse 6984. In another verse (6379) he refers to Gaṇēśa as the remover of obstacles—*Vikkiṇa Vināyakar*. Sambandar narrates briefly the local story of the origin of Gaṇēśa in the verse quoted above (1330). If the appearance of the sculptures in the second quarter of the eighth century is any indication, more reliable than the late literary traditions, it would point to the possibility of a later date to the *Tēvāram* of the two earlier saints, or at least to the particular hymn in question. The absence of any mention of Gaṇēśa in the post-*Śaṅgam* works in contrast to his mention in the *Tēvāram* would also indicate a chronological gap between the two.

MURUGAN

The cult of Murugan was very old in the Tamil country and in the numerous references to him in the earliest strata of the literature we get a glimpse of his original form and worship. The *Atiṅgurunūru* (308) refers to his great hill abode “*murugar māmalai*”.

The *Padiruppattu* (2nd decad, lines 5-8) refers to his fight with Śūraṇ and his hordes with his *eh̄u* (*vēl*) ruddy with blood, mounted on his elephant;

*Añanguḍai avuñar ēmam puñarkkum
śūruḍai mułumudal tañinda pēr iśai,
kaduñjina viral vēl kaliru ürndāṅgu—
śevvāy eh̄ham vilāngunar aruppa,*

His might was worshipped, and the worship consisted of the possessed dance—*veriyāṭṭu*, by the folk of the hilly tracts. He was called ‘Śē-ey, Neđuvēl or Murugu’, was considered to live in, or be represented by, the Kadambu tree, was decorated by oleander garlands and offered preparations out of the *tinai* (*setaria*) and had goats or rams sacrificed—*Aingurunūru* (vv. 245, 247 and 249), *Narrinai* (vv. 34, 47, 82, 225), *Kuruntokai* (vv. 111, 214, 263, 360 and 362), *Padiruppattu* (v. 26), *Ahanānūru* (1:3; 59; 11; 98:10; 158:16) and *Puranānūru* (162-12; 23:3-4, 14; 56:7-8; 14; 56:7-8; 295:15; 299:6). His association was with the Kadambu tree and hence his name Kadamban—*Kār-alar-Kadamban*, as in *Mañimekalai* (4:49)—is referred to also by the other works of the later period, viz., *Perumbāñārruppadai* (75), *Paripādal* (19:2 and 2:104) and *Silappadikāram* (24-*Pāttumadai Nēriśai*). *Narrinai* (82) mentions for the first time his consort, *Valli*—Murugu *punarndu iyanra* *Valli* and *Aham* (59 and 149) makes, perhaps, the first reference to *Tirupparankunram* as the seat of Murugan, describing him as the wielder of the leaf-shaped *vēl* and the destroyer of Śūrapañman and his kin. The second place of Murugan, as *Neđuvēl*, mentioned in the earlier texts (*Puram* 55) is *Śendil* or *Śir-Alaivāy* (*Tirucendür*) which is also referred to in *Silappadikāram* (24), profuse in its reference to Murugan and his cult. A temple for Murugan—Murugan *Kōttam*—is mentioned in *Puram* (299:6). The *Silappadikāram* (24: *Pāttumadai* 8) mentions *Ērahām*, besides *Śēngōdu* and *Venkunru* as his abodes. It is only the *Tirumurugārruppadai* that mentions all the six abodes, viz., *Parañkunru*, *Śir-Alaivāy*, *Avinankudi*, *Ērahām*, *Palamudirśolai* and *Kunrutōrādal*, the last general abode being referred to in the same general term earlier in *Kuriñjippāṭṭu* (lines 208-9).

In the *Pattuppāṭṭu* collection the *Perumbāñārruppadai* (lines 457-9) describes Murugan as the son of the goddess (Umā) that dances the *tuñāngai*, and as one who killed the fierce Śūraṇ in the vast expanse of the sea. The *Maduraikkāñji* of the same collection

mentions him, as the wearer of the garland of Kaṭamba flowers, and also the ‘possessed’ dancers, the Vēlan and Śālinī (lines 610-16); as also the *Paṭṭinappālai* (lines 154-55) which refers to the *veriyādal*. The *Kalittokai* too mentions him as *Sevvēl* (93:25-29) who killed the Śūran.

The *Paripāḍal* has eight long poems on Murugan (Nos. 5, 8, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 21). They describe him as the rider on the elephant called *Piṇimukam*, the wielder of the *vēl* (spear) and the destroyer of Śūran, who took the form of a mango tree, and as the god who cleft asunder the hill called *Kiravuñcham* (*Krauñcha*). The story of his birth is also narrated. He is described as the offspring of the god that destroyed the three cities (Śiva), generated in the womb of Umā, when at the request of Indra, the foetus was split into many parts, and given to him. From him the *rishis* took the parts and sacrificed them into the fire, and gave them as *avi* (*havirbhāga*) to all the six *Krittikā* patnis, Arundati excepted. And to each of them was born a child, all laid on one lotus blossom in the *poygai* (pond) in the *Himalaya* (*Śaravāṇa-p-poygai*), so that they reunited into one. This incorporates the Skanda-Kārttikēya-Śaravaṇabhava-Shaṇmukha cult with Murugan. Even as a child Murugan is said to have withstood a further attack by Indra’s *vajra* when he split again into six only to reunite, and the awestruck Indra made Murugan, the Commander—‘Śenāpati’ of the celestials and gave his daughter Devānai (Dāvасēna) in marriage to him. Indra gave him also the peacock, Agni the pet cock, Yama the goat, and the other gods, the weapons and attributes, *viz.*, the *maran*, sword, spear, axe, battle-axe (*malu*), the *kaṇicci* and *kaṇali*, *mālai* (*akshamāla*) and bell which he held in his twelve hands. Another context mentions the *pāśa* as one of them. This would show that as Dēvasēnāpati he was armed with all the weapons and attributes of the other *dēvas* produced from their own bodies (*sakti*). Tirupparankunram was his abode where all the gods went to worship him. His consort was Valli and he was installed there in the temple as the god of the Kaṭambu and the beloved son (Skanda-Māśilāmani) of the god with the darkened throat (*Nilakantha*; Śiva) and the goddess who was without blemish (Māśili-Umā). His espousing Valli the offspring of the deer, by the *kalavu* method, is said to have often made his other spouse, Dēvānai, the daughter of Indra, jealous and weep. He is stated to have married Valli in his earthly abode while Dēvānai was his celestial spouse. His mount is mentioned as the elephant—*piṇi-mukam ūrṇdu*—in some contexts (5:2) and as the peacock—*mayaṇ-*

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mēl-nāyiru—in others (18:26). The peacock banner is mentioned along with the elephant mount in another place (17:48). The cock is mentioned only as his pet. His body is likened to the colour of fire, his garment and garland red, the colour of the shaft of his *vēl* coral and his face was like the rising sun.

The *Tirumurugārruppādai*, forming the later invocatory piece, by Nakkirar, to a collection of earlier poems in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, is a more elaborate description not only of the god, but also of his six abodes (later called *padai-viḍu*), on which are based practically all the later concepts of Murugan revealed in mediaeval sculpture, and the much later *Tiruppugal*.

The elephant mount is not commonly found or mentioned in sculptures or texts outside the Tamil country, and this concept persists in the Tamil country till the close of the tenth or eleventh century A.D. The *Padirruppattu* (11:6) and the *Puram* (56: 7-8) are perhaps, the first to mention this

“*kaḍum-cina-viral vēl kaliru ūrndāṅgu*”
(*Padirruppattu*)

*mani-mayil uyariya-mārā venri-p
piṇi muka ūrdi — on Seyyōnum ena*
(*Puram*)

The peacock as the banner is first mentioned in *Aham*, and later in the *Paripāṭal*, quoted above, and again in the *Tirumurugārruppādai* (line 122) where too the mount is said to be the elephant:

*pal pori maññai vel koḍi uyariya
oḍiyā vilavīn Nediyōn kūṇrattu*
(*Aham*: 149: 15-16).

The *Śilappadikāram* (14:10) is the first to mention a temple of the god whose banner was the cock, instead of the peacock.

*Kōli-c-cēvar-koḍiyōn kōṭtamum
as also Tirumurugārruppādai (line 38)
Kōli-ōngiya venraḍu virarkoḍi*

The cock banner along with the śakti or *vēl* is mentioned in *Bṛihatsamhitā* (Ch. 57) dated c. 550 A.D. as “*Skandah Kumāra-rūpah śakti dharō barhi kētuścha*”. The *Mahābhārata* (III, 231, 16) associates the cock as his pet and plaything—*tvam krīḍasē Shanmukha kukkuṭēna yathēṣṭa nānāvidha kāmarūpi*. Murugan as the six-faced God finds mention for the first time in the *Śilap-*

padikāram (5: 170)—*Ārumuka-c-cevvēl anī tikal kōyilum*, and the *Tirumurugārruppādai* (lines 91-118) explains the significance of each one of the six faces and twelve arms. However, six-faced forms of Murugan, known as Ārumukam or Shanmukha is not known from early sculpture in the Tamil country except perhaps one from Kāñchī now in the Madras Museum, c. tenth century A.D. The *Tevāram* has nearly forty references to Murugan, where in most of them Śiva is extolled as the father of *Kumaraṇ*, also called *Sēndan*, *Kadamban*, *Vēl*, *Kandan*, *Murugavēl*, *Śaravanattān*, *Vēlaṇ* and in one instance *Ārumukaṇ*, who was the husband of *Valli*, the *Kurava* maiden, and who wielded the cock banner and destroyed *Sūrapaṇman*.

Evidences, numismatic, sculptural and epigraphic, are numerous, showing that Skanda was as much popular in the rest of India as in Tamilakam, from the beginning of the Christian era. The coins of Huvishka and the Yaudhēyas, the sculptures of the Guptas, Ikshvākus, Chālukyas and Rāshṭrakūṭas, and the inscriptions of the early Pallavas and Kadambas attest to this. Recently a Kārttikēya temple in brick has been excavated in the Ikshvāku capital of Vijayāpuri in Nāgārjunakonḍa and two sculptures of Skanda, as Kumāra, holding his pet cock in his left arm pressed against the hip, illustrate the reference made to this feature ("Sel-vavarāṇam", *Paripāḍal*, 5: 58).

As against this wealth of references early and contemporary in the indigenous literature, and the profusion of scriptural, numismatic and epigraphic evidence from outside, it is surprising to note that, excepting one or two cases, temples dedicated solely to Skanda as the principal deity are not seen and even the number and variety of sculptures representing him in the Tamil country during the period 600-1000 A.D. are rather meagre. The Sahadēva ratha in Māmallapuram was perhaps intended for Skanda, but one cannot be sure about this even. The sculpture of a two-armed deity seated on the neck of an elephant in the upper tier of the eastern face of the Arjuna ratha, generally supposed to represent Indra, may alternatively be Skanda, judging from the literary references cited above, particularly the *Tirumurugārruppādai* (109-110). The posture of one hand, the right, wielding the *āṅkuśa* and the other placed on the left thigh covered by the fine cloth garment is described as follows:—

nalam Peru kalingattu kurāngin miśaiyaśai iya-
torukai, aṅkusaṇ kaḍāva voru kai

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There is a similar sculpture on the east of the upper tier of Mūvar Kōvil *vimāna* in Koṭumbälūr. The earliest principal representations in some of the Mahēndra and Māmalla cave temples and *rathas* dedicated to Śiva seem to have been Sōmaskanda panels in painting, stucco or wooden relief with Skanda, represented as a child on the lap of Umā. From the time of Paramēśvaravarman I to the time of Dantivarman Pallavamalla, these are carved as stone reliefs on the hind wall of the sanctum of the cave and structural temples. They are absent in the Muttaraiyar and Pāṇḍya cave temples, and among the latter the Tirupparaṅkunram cave temple alone contains a Sōmaskanda group in the sanctum of the Śiva shrine. On the eastern face of the ground floor or first *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha youthful Skanda is sculptured in the niche at the southern end. In the northern shrine of the Trimūrti cave temple, he is represented as Brahma-Śāstā, youthful, four-armed and with the attributes of Brahmā, thus showing his superiority over Brahmā. Instead of interpreting this by the usual Āgamic story used by Gopinatha Rao to explain this sculpture, it may perhaps be taken to illustrate the almost contemporary local version embodied in the *Tirumurugārruppādai* (150-170). This refers to the cursing of Brahmā by Murugan and his imprisonment, and the deputation of the *dēvas* including Śiva and Vishṇu for his release.

In the Pāṇḍya country in which and on the borders of which, the earlier *Saṅgam* and post-Saṅgam works locate the earlier known Murugan temples, the sculptures again are not many. The rock-cut cave temple (9th century A.D.) called Lāḍankōvil, adjoining the Narasimha cave temple in Ānaimalai, Madurai District, is the only example of a cave temple solely dedicated to Subrahmanyā. He is seated in the sanctum with his consort Valli, also seated, to his left. The most interesting feature of this temple is the presence of both the peacock and cock *dhvajas* sculptured in the shallow niches one either side of the shrine entrance. Perhaps this marks the transition phase, when the peacock banner of the earlier texts gave place to the cock banner of later descriptions (*Silappadikāram*, *Tirumurugārruppādai* and *Tēvāram*) and the peacock became more the mount. In the Tirupparaṅkunram cave temple, where Subrahmanyā happens to be the chief deity in worship to-day, he occupies a subsidiary place on the back wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* facing north, into which the two principal rock-cut shrines dedicated to Śiva and Vishṇu situated on the western and eastern ends face. The original dedication of the temple was to Śiva, as the principal deity, in 773 A.D. according

to the inscription there. The Durgā shrine at the centre of the hind wall of the *maṇḍapa* was a slightly later addition formed by scooping away on either side of it, and it is in these two scooped-in parts that we find Subrahmaṇya on the east and Gaṇapati on the west of the Durgā shrine. Gopinatha Rao, while looking for Jyēshṭhā mentioned in the inscription referred to mistook the Subrahmaṇya figure, now covered with stucco, for a camouflaged Jyēshṭhā. Hence his remarks mentioned already. Subrahmaṇya, four-armed, is seated, with his consort by his side on his left and a *rishi*-like figure on the right. In front of the seat is a group of sculptures showing the peacock, the elephant, two *gaṇas*, a ram and another *gaṇa* holding aloft a *kukkuṭadhvaja* or cock-banner. On the lateral wall of the Durgā shrine, adjacent to Subrahmaṇya, is Brahmā. Over Subrahmaṇya are shown Sūrya and Chandra in the flying posture.

Another interesting sculpture of Subrahmaṇya as Kumāra is found in the rock-cut Śiva cave temple called Malaikkolundiśvaram in Tirumalai, Rāmanāthapuram District. The sculpture occupies a large niche on the wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* in front of the shrine cell. Kumāra, is shown standing as a youth in *dvibhaṅga*, his left hand placed on the raised up left hip in *kaṭi* and the right hanging down with palm in front of his right thigh. To his right is a dwarf *gaṇa* holding the long stalk of an umbrella, slant over the head of Kumāra, suggesting the story of his dancing the *Kudai-āttam*, with the slant parasol as the screen, during his battle with the *avunar*, as described in *Śilappadikāram* (22: 52-53). On the same side is planted a tall *dhvajastambha* with a cock ensign on top. To the left of Kumāra is a kneeling devotee. In front of the pedestal are carved the reliefs of a ram on the right and a peacock on the left facing each other.

These two sculptures would clearly indicate that, in addition to the Elephant and Peacock mounts, Subrahmaṇya had sometimes a third mount the Ram, as suggested in the *Tirumurugārruppaḍai* (210), where it is called *takar* (ram)

*takaran-maññaiyan pukar
il śēvalam kodiya nediyōn*

The *Purapporul Venbāmālai* also describes his ram mount as *ēlakam*.

Ēlakam mērkondu llaiyōn ikal venrān

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This would emphasise his association with an aspect of Agni, whose vehicle it is. The cock banner in the latter example is in accordance with the later concepts. The peculiarities in these two sculptures, particularly, the *ram*, are not described by Gopinatha Rao.

The lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli contains on the back wall of the *maṇḍapa*, which has two shrines one at either end dedicated to Śiva and Vishṇu as in Tirupparaṅkunram, a standing figure of Subrahmaṇya as Kumāra, four-armed. He occupies the second niche from the west, next to that of Gaṇapati. On the northern face of the second storey of the Pāṇḍya monolithic *vimāna*, the Veṭṭuvāṅkōvil in Kalugumalai, is a fine seated form of Subrahmaṇya, four-armed, holding a rosary in one hand, the upper left, and what appears to be śakti in the upper right. An almost similar but slightly later sculpture belonging to the Pallava-Chōla transition, perhaps in the time of Aparājita (885-903), is known from Tiruvorriyūr. An example of Subrahmaṇya as Śikhivāhana (*Tārakāri*) is found in one of the panels in the Puñjai temple, Tanjore District, and another seated figure of large dimensions, now unfortunately broken, with a comparatively small peacock below, from Kāñchīpuram, now placed in the Madras Museum, can be attributed to the tenth century A.D. The Pāṇḍya cave temple in Müvaraivenprān, Rāmanāthapuram District, dedicated to Śiva, contains in the *maṇḍapa* a sculpture of Śikhivāhana, i.e., Subrahmaṇya on the peacock, which is obviously a later addition of the eleventh century A.D. The sculpture relief of Subrahmaṇya with Valli and Dēvasēna, standing on the hind wall of the rock-cut *maṇḍapa* of the Śiva cave temple called Umaiyāñdar temple in Tirupparaṅkunram is likewise a later addition to the Pāṇḍya cave temple and is later than the 11th century A.D.

The construction of a temple solely dedicated to Subrahmaṇya, in Kanṇanūr in the Pudukkōṭṭai area of the present Tiruchirāpalli district, in the middle of the tenth century A.D. marks perhaps the fresh spurt that the Murugan cult had, from this time onwards. Till then, the rise of the *Bhakti* movement, giving greater prominence to Śiva and Vishṇu by the Nāyanmārs and Alvārs seems to have lessened the importance of the Murugan of earlier times. The Bālasubrahmaṇya temple in Kanṇanūr is unique in being an all-stone structural temple of the Pallava-Chōla transition. Much like all the Śiva temples of the period having the *nandi* at the four corners round the *grīva* above the shrine, it has four elephants, the

vāhana of Subrahmanya at the four corners on top of the *vimāna* round the *grīva* and another elephant placed in front of the shrine, again like the *nandi* of a Śiva temple. The original idol in the sanctum is unfortunately broken. The inscriptions also call it the Bāla-subrahmanya temple. The earlier forms of Subrahmanya of the Pallava-Chōla transition in the Pudukkōṭṭai area (*Pudukkōṭṭai State Manual*, II, 1, p. 698) are represented with the hand in position called ‘cīnmudrā’ or with the *akshamālā* along with the characteristic weapon *śakti* as in the Kannanur temple and in the subshrine of the Tirukkaṭṭalai Śiva temple. The one in the subshrine of the Nārttāmalai Vijayālayachōliśvaram has a flaming head-dress. The figure on the upper tier of the Kannanur *vimāna* on the southern side is that of Dandapāṇi. In the 9th century temple at Kāndiyūr the standing two-armed figure of Kumāra, holding a *śakti* in his right and a conch in his left hand is unique. Perhaps the conch symbolises him as a victor in battle.³⁷

In the great temple at Tanjore are epigraphical references to Rājarāja I and his relatives presenting bronze images—of Subrahmanya, along with those of Gaṇapati, Vishṇu and Sūrya and other icons of Śiva. Like the other five contemporary cults, the Kauṁāra cult also received the reformatory touches of Sankara in the first quarter of the ninth century A.D.

BRAHMA

The concept of Brahmā as the creator of the universe was known from very early times as evidenced by references to him in the *Purānāñjūru* (194:5) and *Narrinai* (240:1)

“*Paḍaittōn manra, appaṇpilālan*”
and
“*Aytē kamma, ivvulaku paḍaittōnē*”

He is called “*todāṅkarakaṇ tōṇriya mudiyavan*”, i.e. “He, the primordial who appeared at the very beginning of creation” in *Kalittokai* (1:2 line 1). His lotus seat, and his origin from the navel of Vishṇu are referred to in the post-*Saṅgam* works. The trinity

37. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58—pp. 54-55, where the author of the article takes the conch to symbolise the *pranava* and hence identifies the form as Dēśika-Subrahmanya or Svami-nātha or Gurumūrti, a concept, which appears to have not so much developed as in later times.

Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva as the chief Gods, and their respective duties are indicated in *Tirumurugārruppaṭai* (160-63). The three gods are also freely mentioned in their respective capacities in the hymns of the Nāyanmārs and Ālvārs with Śiva as the dominant of the three by the former and Vishṇu by the latter. For example the eighth verse in the decades of Sambandar extols Śiva as greater than Brahmā and Vishṇu.

TRIMURTI

The first creation of Pallava Mahēndravarman I was the cave temple at Maṇḍagappaṭtu with three shrine cells, where in his own inscription he says that he made this divine abode called ‘*Lakshītāyatanaṁ*’ (after his own title *Lakshita*) in equal importance, for the gods Brahmā, Iśvara and Vishṇu. It was only after this very first in the new mode of excavation of temples, into the live rock, for the Trimurtis that he started making separate temples for Śiva or Vishṇu. Māmallā again has his earlier cave temple in Tirukkālukunram, completed immediately after his conquest of Vātāpi (642 A.D.), where the main shrine is dedicated to Śiva, with sculptures of Vishṇu and Brahmā, one on either side of the shrine entrance. Again Paramēśvaravarman I excavated the so-called Rāmānuja maṇḍapa cave temple and the Dharmarāja maṇḍapa cave temple, called Atyanta-kāma Pallavēśvaram in Māmallapuram, with three shrine cells, apparently for the Trimūrti, the central one being for Śiva.

In the Trimūrti cave temple in Māmallapuram, datable towards the close of Paramēśvara’s reign (700 A.D.) significantly enough, the place of Brahmā in his shrine on the north is taken by Brahmaśāsta, indicating the dominance of Subrahmanyā, or his equation with Brahmā. In the structural temples of Rājasimha, *eg.* the Shore temple, the Kailāsanātha temple and the Panamalai temple, Brahmā and Vishṇu find their places on the inner faces of either walls of the *antarāla* or vestibule flanking the passage into the shrine. This practice continues till the later Pallava times, while in the Viratāṇeśvara temple at Tiruttani, as also in many of the early Chōla temples, Brahmā occupies the northern niche on the outer wall of the *vimāna*, and Vishṇu is relegated to the western niche behind the sanctum, who in the early Chōla times is often displaced by forms of Harihara or Ardhanārī, which again by about the middle of the tenth century give place to the Liṅgapurāṇamūrti or Annāmalaiyār. In the case of the Pāṇḍya monolithic temple, Veṭṭuvāṅkōil in Kalugumalai, the place of Brahmā

on the northern side of the *grīva* is taken by Subrahmanyā, as in the Trimūrti cave temple. Separate shrines for Brahmā are evident from the large early Chōla sculptures of Brahmā in the round from Tiruvaiyāru, Karuttaṭānkuḍi and Kāṇḍiyūr in the Tanjore District. While in all the sculptural representations Brahmā is shown with four faces (three visible in bas-reliefs) and without a beard, there are a few, as in the example from the wall niche in Kāṇḍiyūr, where he is shown bearded as in the northern examples.³⁸

The combination in about the middle of the eighth century A.D. of the Trimūrti concept and the gods of the *śaṇmata* or six creeds viz., Śaiva, Vaishṇava, Gāṇapatiya, Kaumāra, Saura and Śākta is remarkably illustrated in the lower rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchirāpalli. It consists of a long rock-cut *maṇḍapa* facing south with two shrine cells, one at either end, east and west. The east facing shrine is dedicated to Śiva and is empty as in all earlier examples, the west facing one dedicated to Vishṇu containing his sculpture. The back wall of the *maṇḍapa* in between has five large niches with five prominent sculptures of Gaṇeśa, Kumāra, Brahmā, Sūrya and Durgā, from west to east in the order mentioned. Thus with Śiva and Vishṇu in either end shrine, and Brahmā in the middle niche at the centre of the *maṇḍapa*, the Trimūrti group is complete, and, excluding him the rest will make up the *śaṇmata* group. This is anticipated slightly earlier in the Trimūrti cave temple of Paramēśvaravarman I at Māmallapuram where we have a combination of Brahmā and Subrahmanyā in the northern shrine, Śiva in the middle shrine, Vishṇu in the southern shrine and a Durgā niche to the south of it. Gaṇapati and Sūrya alone are omitted.

This norm set by this combination in the heart of the Chōla country, lying between the Pallava country in the north and the Pāndya country in the south, was apparently followed up in the respective regions with slight variations. Thus in the Pallava country, where the construction of stone structural temples was in vogue by this time, the arrangement came to be as follows:—Ganapati in the niche on the south wall of the *ardhamāṇḍapa*, and Dakṣināmūrti in the south wall of the *garbhagriha*, Vishṇu in the west, and Brahmā on the north

38. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1957-58, fig. 8.

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walls of the *garbhagriha* and Durgā on the north wall of the *ardhamandapa* with the elimination of Sūrya and Subrahmanya, perhaps because the former was represented by Vishnu and the latter, as Dēśika, was represented by Brahmā or Dakshināmūrti. Such an arrangement is found in the Muktēśvara, Iravātanēśvara and Tripurāntakeśvara temples in Kāñchī and the Vīratāttanēśvara in Tiruttani. This becomes a feature of the temples of the Pallava-Chōla transition and subsequent Chōla temples, throughout the Tamil country.

In the Pāṇḍya country, where cave temples were excavated till the close of the tenth century, the Tirupparanikunṭam cave temple, of plan almost similar to the lower cave temple at Tiruchirāpalli has its *mandapa* facing north with shrine cells for Śiva in the form of Sōmāskanda (and *linga*), and Vishnu on the west and east ends. Soon after the excavation of the cave temple by Śāttan Gaṇavati in 773 A.D., his wife added the Durgā shrine by excavating into the back wall of the *mandapa* at its centre with sculptures of Subrahmanya and Gaṇapati in the recesses of equal dimension to its west and east. Here the Sūrya of the *śaṇmata* is shown over Subrahmanya and Brahmā of the Trimūrti group on the adjacent wall. The cave temples at Tirumalāpuram, Tirunelvēli District and Sevilippatti, Rāmanāthapuram District, having a single shrine cell for Śiva in each case, have sculptures of Gaṇapati, Vishnu, and Brahmā, Sūrya and Subrahmanya being omitted. Sūrya and Subrahmanya, however, did not remain out of the group in worship for long, for soon in the Pallava-Chōla transition and early Chōla temples they found separate shrines in the *ashtaparivāra*, or the eight shrines surrounding the main *vimāna*, a scheme which continued till the close of the eleventh century A.D.

It may be recalled here that close on this, in the first quarter of the ninth century A.D., Saṅkara reformed the six cults viz., those of Śiva, Vishnu, Gaṇapati, Kumāra (Subrahmanya), Sūrya and Śakti, extolling at the same time the concept of Śiva as the teacher *par excellence*—Dakshināmūrti.

CHANDESA

Commencing from the period of the Pallava-Chōla transition (850-950 A.D.) the *ashtaparivāra* included also the shrine of Chanḍēśa or Chanḍikēśvara (or Tanḍēśvara in inscriptions) fol-

lowing the impetus given by the *Tēvāram* hymnists. This became a regular, and dominant feature of the Śiva temples of the Tamil country in the succeeding epochs. The earliest sculpture depicting the story of Śiva blessing Čaṇḍeśa and making him his primary servant—*mūlabhṛitya*—is to be found in Māmallapuram. One is on the second *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha which was brought to its present stage of completion by Paramēśvaravarman I (670-700 A.D.). The sculpture inside the central shrine of the Mahishamardini cave temple, where also work continued to be done till the time of Paramēśvara I, is unique among the Sōmāskanda sculptures in that it contains besides the usual Śiva, Umā and Skanda, with Vishnu and Brahmā in the background on either side, a recumbent *nandi* and a devotee, kneeling, and Śiva holding what appears to be a garland in one of his hands, suggesting the Čaṇḍeśānugraha form.

There are about eighteen references to the story of Čaṇḍeśa in the hymns of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar in the *Tēvāram*, eight by Appar (4627, 4636, 4792, 4808, 5243, 5928, 5965 and 6431), seven by Sambandar (521, 670, 1147, 3378, 3805 and 4039), and four by Sundarar (7382, 7619, 7786 and 8121). Māṇikkavācakar refers to him in the *Tiruvācakam*, 319 (*Tiruttōṇōkkam*, 7).

A few more sculptures of Čaṇḍeśānugrahamūrti, are to be found in the structural temples of the Pallavas. It was Rajaraja Chōla I who built a prominent and separate shrine for Čaṇḍeśa, immediately to the north of the vestibule of the main *vimāna* in Tanjore and thereafter it has become a regular feature, occupying the same place in the plan of all Śiva temples till today in the south. The best sculpture of Čaṇḍeśānugrahamūrti is the well-known one on the northern wing of the eastern face of the main *vimāna* in Gangaikondachōlapuram, built by Rājēndra Chōla I. If instead of a mere sculpture depicting the story of Čaṇḍeśa, as in the Māmallapuram sculptures mentioned, and, as many other stories relating to Śiva's deeds are, Čaṇḍeśa comes to occupy a position equal to that of the other deities in the *ashtaparivāra* pantheon of the Pallava-Chōla transition, it is because of the recognition of his greatness and divinity by the Nāyanmārs. This again may possibly be an indication of the period of the three Nāyanmārs as between 650-850 A.D. It is to be noted also that in this respect Čaṇḍeśa has come to enjoy a unique preference among the earlier devotees, prior to the *Tēvāram* hymnists.

ŚIVA

Even the earliest mention of Śiva in the *Aham* and *Puram* collections reveal a developed iconographic concept of Śiva the god, who is not identified with any pre-existing local god under a local name, as Vishṇu, Balarāma and Subrahmanyā, for example, were under such local names as Māyōn, Vāliyōn or Murugan. His abode is the *Al* or *Ālam* (*pipal*) tree and he is the three-eyed god, who gave the four ancient works—the *vēdas*, and the place of his worship was the open space in front of the tree—ālamurram.

*nāñmarai mudu nūl mukkaṭ śelvan
ālamurram*

(*Aham*, 181: 16-17)

Again, *Puram* (166: 1-4), states that the thoroughly conceived ancient work, consisting of four divisions—the *vēdas* and the six parts or *angas*—were ever residing in the mouth of Śiva, the primordial being of the hoary past.

*nanru āynda nūl nimir śadai
mudu mudalvaṇ vāy pōkādu,
onru purinda īr-iranḍin,
āru unarnda oru mudu nūl*

(*Puram*, 166: 1-4)

The idea is repeated many times in the *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvācakam* hymns.

Narrinai (343:4) and *Puram* (198:9; 199:1) speak of the divinity of the *Al* tree as *Kaḍavul ālam*, due to its being the residence of god, evidently Śiva, as would be clear from the other descriptions, eg., *Kalittokai* (81:7; 83:14), *Śirupānārruppaḍai* (line 97) of the *Pattuppāṭtu* collection. The *Maṇimēkalai* (3:144) and *Śilappadikāram* (Ch. 24) refer to Śiva as *Alamar-Selvan*, while the *Tirumurugārruppadai* (1-256) gives the variant *Āl-keļu-kaḍavul*. *Puram* (56) describes him as the god with matted locks, ruddy like the fire, and the blackened throat (*Nilakantha*), who wields the invincible weapon called *malu* (axe) and who holds aloft the banner of the bull.

*ērru valaṇ uyariya eri marul avir śadai
māṭṭru arum kaṇicci mani miḍarrōnum.*

(*Puram*, 56: 1-2)

Again *Puram* (55: 1-5) describes him as the god of the dark throat (*Nīlakanṭha*) with a third eye in his forehead, who wielding the bow, that was the great mountain (*mēru*) strung by the snake (*Vāsuki*), destroyed the three cities (*tripura*) and vouchsafed victory to the mighty gods (as *Tripurāntaka*).

on̄gu malai peru vil pāmbu nāñ̄ koñ̄-i
 oru kañ̄ai kon̄du mū eyil udarri
 peru viral amararkku ven̄ri tanda
 kañ̄ai midarru añ̄nal Kāmar-sen̄ni
 pirai nudal vilāngum oru kañ̄

(*Puram*, 55: 1-5)

The third eye and the black throat (*Trinētra* and *Nīlakanṭha*) are described again in *Puram* (91: 5) as

pāl purai pirai nudal polinda sen̄ni
 nilamañ̄i midarru oruvan̄

(*Puram*, 91: 5-6)

The *Kalittokai* in two contexts (i, 2, lines 1-5 and ii, 38, lines 1-5) describes Śiva as *Tripurāntaka* with three eyes (*Mukkaññāñ̄*) who at the request of the gods headed by the Patriarch who appeared even at the very beginning (*Brahmā*) destroyed the three cities and as one who wielded the mountain as his bow and punished the ten-headed *arakkan* (*Rāvaṇa*) when he tried to uplift the *Himālaya*, where he was seated along with his consort *Umā* (*Umā-sahita*).

todangar kañ̄ tōnriya mudiyavañ̄ mudalāka,
 adaññādār midal sāya amarar vandu irattalin̄,
 madañgal pōl śinai-imayam śey avuñarai-k
 kadandu adu muñpodu Mukkaññāñ̄ mū eyilum̄
 udan̄rakkāl

(*Kalittokai*, i, 2: lines 1-5)

and

imaiya vil vāñgiya ūñjañai andañan̄
 umai amarndu uyar malai irundañanāka,
 ai-iru talaiyin̄ arakkar kōmāñ̄
 todip-poli tañak-kaiyin̄ kīl pukundu, añ̄ malai
 edukkal sellādu ulappavan̄ pōla

(*Kalittogai*, ii, 38: lines 1-4)

54 RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY MONUMENTS

The *Tirumurugārruppaṭai* (lines 151-54) of the *Pattuppāṭtu* collection, has again the same Umā-Mahēśvara, Ardhanārī, Vṛisha-bhadhvaja and *Tripurāntaka* concepts.

... *vel ēru*
valam vayin uyariya, palar pukal tini tōl
Umai amarndu vilāṅgum, imaiyā Mukkan
mū-eyil murukkiya, muraṇ miku-śelvanum

The *Maṇimēkalai* (i, 54-55) describes him as the god with the third eye in the fore-head and as the first among the gods, the godlings of the city coming last in the series.

nudal vili nāttattu Iraiyoṇ mudalāka-p
pativāl śadukkattu-t-teyvam īru āka

The *Śilappadikāram* in two contexts (6:40-45; 28:66-75) describes Śiva as the dancer, dancing the mode called *Koḍukotti* or *Kotticēdam* (the dance of victory) along with Umā, and the dance called *Pāñdaraṅgam* for Brahmā, as the charioteer of *Tripurāntaka*, to witness

Tiripuram eriya-t-tēvar vēṇḍa,
eri muka-p-pērambu ēval kēṭpa,
Umaiyaval oru tiranāka, ḍōngiya
Imaiyavan ādiya Koḍukkotti āḍalam;
tēr muṇ ninra tiśai mukan kāṇa,

Pāradi (Bhārati) yādiya viyan Pāñdaraṅgamum;

and :

Tirunilai-c-cēvaḍi śilambu vāy pulambavum,
pari taru řen kaiyil paḍu parai ārppavum,
ſen-kaṇ āyiram tirukkurippu arulavum,
ſeṇjaḍai ſenṛu tiśai mukam alambavum;
pāḍakam padaiyādu, śūdakam tulāṅgādu
mēkalai oliyādu, meṇmulai aśaiyādu,
vār kulai āḍādu, maṇi-k-kulal avilādu,
Umaiyaval oru tiran āka, ḍōngiya
Imaiyavan ādiya, Kotti-c-cēdam

Kālī (Durgā) making Śiva dance, as mentioned in *Śilappadikāram* (20:34-40) has already been referred to. This image of the dancer with the *jata-maṇḍala* whisking in space and Umā watching or dancing anticipate some features of the *Ananda tāṇḍava* iconography of later times, peculiar to the Tamil country. The same work (2:38-39) hints at the Chandraśekhara aspect of Śiva as one

"who wore with grace the crescent moon while the gods stood adoring him".

*Kulavi-t-tiṅgaḥ imaiyavar ētta
 alakodu muditta

 periyōñ taruka-tiru nudal*

From thousands of hymns in the *Tēvāram* we get an idea of the iconography of some of the important forms or aspects of Siva such as Ardhanārī (3937) Umāmahēsvara (97), Ēkapāda (234), Ēkapāda Trimūrti (1382), Gaṅgādhara (2567), Gaṅgā visarjana (4113), Kaṅkāla (6528), Kalyānasundara (7380), Gajāri (1988, 4472), Kāmadahana (4819), Kālāri (212), Kirāta (6585), Harihara (4804), Sadāśiva (3545), Chāndesānugraha (6413), Chandraśēkhara (1), Sōmāskanda (6498), Dakshināmūrti (7894), Tripurāntaka (113), Pāśupata (6743), Bikshāṭana (12), Bhujāṅgarātrāsa (2), Bhairava (2891), Rishabārūḍa (1), Lingōdbhava (138, 6175, 6984), Vishāpaharaṇa (2) and Jalandhara (4112).

Such rare forms, including some dancing ones, as Garudāntika (6780), Kūrmasamhāra (2), Sakala Śiva (3545), Chakradāna (4638), Chāndatāṇḍava (4824), Sadānṛitta (4528), Śarabhāmūrti (7275), Śārdūlahara (733), Simhaghna (8235), Dakshayajñahata (7191), Brahmaśiraḥ-khaṇḍa (1411), Raktabikshāprasādāna (7183), and Varāhasamhāra (2) are also mentioned.

Many of the common ones are mostly found in the sculptures of the period between 600 and 1000 A.D. in the Pallava, Pāṇḍya, Muttaraiya, and early Chōla temples.

In the eighth verse of every one of his decades, Sambandar refers to the incident of Rāvaṇa trying to lift the *Kailāṣa* on which Śiva and Umā were seated and to Śiva's pressing it down by his toe, causing Rāvaṇa's discomfiture. This story in sculpture occurs for the first time in the late Pallava structural temples dating after 730 A.D. eg. in the Muktēśvara, Mātaṅgēśvara and Piravātanēśvara in Kāñchi, and in the Tirupparanikuṇṭram Pāṇḍya cave temple (773 A.D.) to the west of its facade. Similar sculptures in Ellora, also belong to a period after 750 A.D. Such a sculpture is absent in the Pallava-Chōla transition or early Chōla times, and is again to be found as a rare instance in the Paṭalaiyārai temple dating after 1100 A.D. This again seems to be indicative of the contemporaneity of the Nāyanmārs and the Kalittokai with this period 700-850 A.D.

DAKSHINAMURTI

Perhaps the references to Śiva as the lord of the four *vēdas* and as one seated under the banyan tree in the *Ahanāñūru* are the germs of the later concept of Dakshināmūrti. Earlier sculptures of Śiva as Mahāyōgi, are known from elsewhere.

ñālam nārum nalam kelu nallisai
nān marai mudu nūl mukkāt-celvan
ālamurram kaviṇ pera-t-tai iya
poygai sūlnda polil manai makalir

(Aham 181: 15-18).

But the earliest sculpture of Śiva as Dakshināmūrti, perhaps another unique southern concept, is in the Kailāsanātha temple in Kāñchī (730 A.D.) where it occurs on the southern wall of the *vimānas* of the Rājasimhēśvara and Mahēndravarmēśvara and on the southern wall of the Olakkanñēśvara in Māmallapuram, also built by Rājasimha (700-730 A.D.). Subsequently the sculpture occurs in the Muktēśvara, Airāvatēśvara, Iravātanēśvara, Piravātanēśvara and Tripurāntakēśvara in Kāñchī, on the southern side of the second storey of the Pāṇḍya monolith called Veṭṭuvān Kōil in Kalugumalai, and on the south wall of the *vimāna* of the Viraṭtānēśvara at Tiruttani, built in Pallava Aparājita's time (903 A.D.). It becomes a regular component of all Śiva temples thereafter, placed in its different forms in the niches of the various *talas* or storeys of the *vimāna*. Sambandar refers to Dakshināmūrti, the Guru or teacher as follows:

nūl adainda kolkaiyālē nūnnādi kūḍutarku
māl adainda nālvar kēṭka nalkiya nallarattai
ālaḍadinda nīlāl mēvi arumarai sōṇṇādu enñe
śēlaḍadinda tāṅkalāni-c-Cēyñālūr mēyavanē

(Tēvāram 515; 1st Tirumurai, 48th decad, verse 1).

Sundarar has it as follows:—

kādu pottarai-k-kiṇṇarar uluvai kaḍikkum pannakam
piḍi-p-paruñjēyam, kōdiṇ māṭavar kuļuvudan
kēṭpa kōla ānlilar kūl arām pakara

(Tēvāram, 7894; 7th Tirumurai, 65th decad, verse 9).

Appar refers to him as the Guru himself in two places (5566, 6934). The Vaishṇavite version in the *Prabandham* is that Śiva's sitting under the banyan tree and preaching to the four disciples was by the blessings of Vishṇu,

These appear to be only an elaboration of the earlier ideas of the *Alamar śelvan* or *Āl kelu Kaḍavuḷ* and of Śiva being the repository of the wisdom of the *Vēdas*, reflected amply in earlier literature. The conception of Śiva as the expounder of the truth of the *Vēdas*, seated under the banyan or pipal tree, with four disciples, and often a deer under him is strongly reminiscent of a similar and well known concept of the Buddha represented in the earlier sculptures, to which perhaps the Dakṣināmūrti concept may be traced. In the Orissan and Eastern Chalukyan (Biccavolu-East Godavari) temples (8th century) Lakuliśa occupies the place of Dakṣināmurti. Saṅkara too, who extolled this concept of Dakṣināmūrti, had four disciples. Significantly enough, the Dakṣināmūrti form, recognised as such, is found for the first time in the Chalukyan area, in the Saṅgamēśvara at Paṭṭadakkal, built between 700 and 730 A.D. in the time of Chālukya Vijayāditya with the help of architects from the south, and modelled after the Pallava structural temples of Rājasimha. The earlier Dakṣināmūrtis are of the *yōga* or *vyākhya* type (meditation and exposition) as in the Pallava examples cited and in the Pallava-Chōla transition period. The *Vīṇādhara* form often occurs as in the Mūvarkoil, Koḍumbälūr and is mentioned by Appar (5214) and Sambandar (2388). The Dakṣināmūrti from the Viraṭ-tānēśvara at Kāṇḍiyūr is seated in half profile in a very easy posture with both legs bent at the knees and crossed over, a rather peculiar and characteristic pose.³⁹ The Jñāna form is found as in Tiruvēṅgaivāśal, where he is again seated in the *utkutikāsana*, a pose suitable for meditation.⁴⁰ Another specimen of Jñāna Dakṣināmūrti is to be seen on the south wall of the sanctum of the Jambukēśvaram temple in Nārttāmalai⁴¹ built in the year 1205 A.D. It is not also uncommon to find the different forms of Dakṣināmūrti on the southern side of the various *talas* of a storeyed *vimāna*. The concept of Dakṣināmūrti becomes more clear in the *Tiruvūcakam* hymns of Māṇikkavācakar (270 and 287), viz., the conception that Śiva sat under the *āl* tree and expounded the eternal truth to the four *munis* (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra) who desired to hear the same.

39. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1955-56.

40. Gopinatha Rao, *Hindu Iconography* II, i, pl. LXXV, fig. 1.

41. *Manual of the Pudukottai State*, II, ii, p. 1078.

*nānṛāka nālvarkkum nāñmaraiyin uṭ poruḷai
anṛu ḍlin kilirundu, aṅgu, aṛam uraittāṇ*
(*Tiruvācakam*, 12—*Tiruccālal*: 16, lines 1-2)

and

anṛu ḍla nilal kīḷ arumaṛaikal tāṇaruḷi
(*Tiruvācakam*, 12—*Tiruppūvalli*: 13, line 1)

It is to be noted here that many early temples of Śiva are named after the *ālam* tree, such a Ālangāḍu, Tiruvālangāḍu Tiruvālanṭurai, Alangudi, and Tiruvāliśvaram.

NATARAJA—ĀDAVALLAN

The dance of Śiva was an absorbing theme and is mentioned in the literature of the pre-*Tēvāram* and *Tēvāram* times including the *Tiruvācakam*. In fact the Tamils had concepts of particular types of dances for the different gods, as occasionally mentioned in the earlier works and more elaborately described in the *Siluppadikāram* (6:38-64), *Koḍukoṭṭi* of Śiva, *Pāṇḍaraṅgam* of Bhārati, *Alliyattokuti* and *Mallāḍal* of Vishṇu *Tudi* and *Kudai* of Murugan, *Kudakkūtu* of Krishna, *Pēdi* of Kāmaṇ or Manmatha, *Marakkāl* of Durgā, *Pāvai* of Śeyyōl (Lakshmī) and the *Kaḍaiyam* of Indrāṇi.

The dances of Śiva and their sublimation into the Ānanda tāṇḍava of *Natēśa* or *Ādavallān*, the Lord of dance, is perhaps the most important contribution of the Tamil country in the realm of concepts, art and iconography.^{41a} This climax, evidently, had not been reached in the time of the *Tēvāram* hymnists as will be clear from a close scrutiny of their references to Śiva's dance, particularly those referring to the poses or attributes suggesting iconography. Sambanda (576) mentions his dancing as *Puyaṅgar* (*Bhujanīga trāṣa*), and *Kālitān-periya Kūttu* (124) or *Kālikā-tāṇḍava* with the fire in one hand. In another decad (2881) he mentions the Kuñcita pose of the leg—*Kālal vaṭar kāl kuñcittu ādinānum*. His dancing to pacify Umā, who was jealous of his having received Gaṅgā on his head, to the recitation of *Sāmagāna*, is mentioned by Appar (4428), a theme elaborated in early sculpture, as for example in the Müvarkoil, Koḍumbalūr and in Tiruvāliśvaram. In another decad (4528) he describes Śiva's dance as follows: "the anklets of the legs jingling, with the fire in the hand that was extended, the tresses sweeping the directions,

41a. P. R. Srinivasan has dealt with this subject at some length in *Roop-Lekha*, Vol. XXVI and XXVII.

the Lord danceth". The famous verse of Appar (4941) beginning '*Kunitta puruvamum*' and referring to his '*edutta porpādam*' (*Kuñcita*), is too well known to be recited. Śiva's dancing the *vat̄tu* with the heads of Vishṇu and Brahmā is also mentioned by Appar (6885). It is Sundarar alone who gives in one *padikam* (8137) the attributes held in three of the four hands of Śiva, dancing in Sirrambalam, as *damaru*, bowl of fire, and snake. Maṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*, repeats the same ideas.

The sculptures of the period amply corroborate the hymnists, again indicating their mutual chronological relation. The earliest sculpture of dancing Śiva was discovered recently as a small panel on top of one of the facade pilasters of the rock-cut cave temple in Śiyamaṅgalam excavated by Mahēndravarman I (c. 630 A.D.). It is a four-armed *bhujaṅgrāsa* form holding aloft a serpent over the head, with another serpent rearing up by the side, as in the early Chālukyan example in Bādāmi and later ones in that area. The pose of the legs almost resembles that of the Ānanda tāṇḍava form, which is rather rare in early sculpture, both in the Tamil and Chālukyā areas. On the northern wall of the second *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha is a sculpture of Śiva dancing before Taṇḍu, who is imitating him. In the Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchī, the peculiar pose of *talasamsphōṭita*, which appears to have been a favourite of Rājasimha, is to be seen frequently. Two dancing forms of Śiva in the Pāṇḍya cave temples in Sevilippaṭti and Tirumalaipuram are of the four-armed *chatura* variety.

The only example of an eight-armed dancing Śiva is to be found in the Pāṇḍya cave temple III in Kunrakkudi, where the pose of the legs is again *chatura*. Such forms are also to be found in the later Pallava structural temples in Kāñchī eg. the Mātaṅgēśvara. The concepts of the greatness of Śiva and Vishṇu alike in being eight-armed are indicated by the Ashtabhujasvāmi temple with inscription recently excavated in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, by the name Atṭabuyakaram for the Vishṇu temple of Kāñchī in the *Prabandham* hymns and the mention by Tirumangai in his Tirunaraiyūr *padikam* of Kō-Cengānān, as the one who built many temples for *enḍol-īśar* or Śiva (*Prabandham* 1505—*Periya Tirumoli*, vi, 6, v. 8-Tirunaraiyūr) and also *Kalittokai* (i). The restriction in the Tamil country to eight, and more often four, hands of dancing Śiva, is in marked contrast to what one finds in the contemporary Chālukyan and Rāshṭrakūṭa examples with as many as sixteen or eighteen hands.

60 RELIGION AS REVEALED BY EARLY MONUMENTS

It is only in the eighth century A.D. that we find the figure of the recumbent or crouching *Muyalakan* of *gāṇa*-like form, called also *Apasmāra*, below the feet of the dancer. The example on the west of the facade of the Tirupparankunram cave temple (773 A.D.) of Śiva dancing in *chatura* over *Muyalakan* watched by Umā and other celestials, with Vishnu and others playing on musical instruments, is the earliest of the kind in the Tamil country. An almost identical bronze, four-armed and dancing in *chatura* over recumbent *muyalakan* is known from a rare collection in the Bank of Italy assignable to the late 9th century A.D.⁴² Similar forms of about the same date as Tirupparankunram, particularly with *Muyalakan*, occur in the Virūpāksha, where the pose is almost *ūrdhvajānu* and in Mallikārjuna where it is *chatura*, both temples of Chālukyan origin in Paṭṭadakkal, dating between 733-46 A.D. In Aihoḷe (temple No. 9) we get both the eight-armed *ūrdhvajānu* and the four-armed *chatura* with *Muyalakan* below. The much damaged dancing Śiva, over the facade of the Mogalrājapuram cave temple in Vijayawada of the same date and of Eastern Chālukya (Vēṅgichālukya) origin⁴³ is a peculiar type of eight-armed *ūrdhvajānu* with *Apasmāra* below, and similar in this and other respects to the Nallur Naṭarāja bronze of the later Pallava period, or the Pallava-Chōla transition. The Kūram Naṭarāja of the late Pallava period is a four-armed *ūrdhvajānu* dancing on *Muyalakan*. The fragmentary Pallava painting in Rājasimha's temple in Pānmalai depicts the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*. The earliest representation of the typical Naṭarāja in the *ānanda tāṇḍava* form is to be found among the small and exquisite panels over the *garbhagṛīha* of the Tiruvāliśvaram temple in the Tirunelvēli District (c. 900-950 A.D.), probably of Pāṇḍya origin. Subsequent Naṭarāja forms in the typical pose, in stone and bronze eg. the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu specimens are too well known to be detailed here.

While the Tiruvāliśvaram Naṭarāja sets the earlier limit for the *ānanda tāṇḍava* specimen with *Muyalakan*, it also seems to set the later limits for the Nāyanmārs. The mention of *Muyalakan* by

42. Raghavan, V. *Indian Antiquities in Europe; Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, 1956, fig. 7.

43. This and other cave temples of Bezwada are obviously not of Vishnu-kundin or Pallava origin, as supposed by Dubreuil (*The Pallavas*, pp. 33, 35) or Longhurst (*Pallava Architecture I*, pp. 5, 24-27) and following them others. Other architectural features apart, the presence of *Muyalakan* below dancing Śiva is itself sufficiently indicative of their date.

the earliest of the *Tēvāram* saints, in four contexts (*Appar-Tēvāram* 5130, 6590, 7139 and 7185) is of importance in this connection as it would point to his date, in the above sculptural context as round about the commencement of the 8th century A.D. He speaks of Śiva's subjugation of the ferocious *Muyalakan*, by trampling over him and his subsequent protection under his feet. It is Māṇikka-vācakar alone that refers to the *Ananda tāṇḍava* as *ānanda-k-kūttu* in his *Tiruvācakam* (588: *Tiruvārttai*, 43, verse 3) indicating again his later date. He also mentions in his *Tiruvācakam*, (3: *Kīrtti-t-tiru akaval*, line 138) that Śiva danced for the sake of Patañjali.

SIVA LINGA

It has already been stated that the sanctums in the early Pallava cave temples dating upto 730 A.D. in Tonḍaimandalam and dedicated to Śiva were devoid of a '*linga*' of Pallava origin.⁴⁴ Even in the structural temples of Rājasimha with the Sōmāskanda relief on the hind wall of the sanctum, forming the primary object of worship, the installation of the '*lingas*' was an afterthought, as the *in situ* evidences would indicate. For example, in the Kailāsanātha at Kāñči, the *āvudaiyar* base is too large for the floor area of the sanctum, occupying, as it does, the entire space and requiring secondary adjustment of the floor stones, leaving no circumambulatory space. The top of the '*linga*', too, hides as in many other cases, the Sōmāskanda panel behind. In another case a vertical groove has been cut on the northern wall of the sanctum to help in slipping down into position of the part of the *āvudaiyār* with the projecting spout. Even these '*lingas*' in the Pallava structural temples, are of black stone, a material different from that of the construction, polished, and faceted, the facets being sixteen, reminiscent of the sixteen *kalas* of Sōma or Śiva. The cylindrical polished '*lingas*' of the same material that came in later lack often the *sutra* markings. In the southern group of cave temples of Pāṇḍya or Muttaraiyar origin, the '*lingas*' in the sanctum are cut *in situ* out of the same rock, as are sometimes the *nandis* in the *maṇḍapas* too, eg., Tirumayam and Tirumalāpuram. Except in three instances, viz., Tirupparankunram, Pirānmalai, and Tirumalai (Rāmanāthapuram), there is no bas-relief on the hind wall of the

44. The only aberrant example is the cave temple at Mēlachēri of doubtful origin, that contains a rock-cut *linga*, as is to be found in the cave temples of the Pāṇḍyas and Muttaraiyars in the south, and dating after 700 A.D. See *Ancient India*, No. 14 (1958), p. 122.

sanctum in these temples and some others like the Umayāndār cave temple in Tirupparankunram are devoid of even the rock-cut '*linga*'. In the lower rock-cut cave temple at Tiruchirāpalli with two shrines, one at either end of the *mandapa*, the Vishnu sanctum at the eastern end contains a bas-relief sculpture of Vishnu, while the Śiva sanctum at the western end, has neither a Sōmāskanda panel nor a *linga*, either rock-cut or installed. This cave temple is non-Pallava, and is datable from other considerations to the middle of the 8th century A.D. In the Pāndya cave temple at Tirupparankunram excavated in 773 A.D., of almost similar design, the Vishnu sanctum contains a Vishnu relief and the Śiva sanctum a Sōmāskanda panel on its back wall and the *linga* in front is installed and not rock-cut. These mark therefore the transition from the worship of the iconic (Sōmāskanda) to the aniconic form (Śiva *linga*) round about 800 A.D., a reversal of what obtained earlier, and what has been persisting in the lower substrata of society throughout.

In the decades of Sambandar the ninth verse refers to the attempts of Vishnu and Brahmā to find out the feet or origin and the crest or end of Śiva's form, who is, in all these contexts, a huge pillar of fire or light (*alar pilambu* or *talar pilambu*) transcending all space as *sōdi-linga* (6577)—*Jyōtir-linga*. Māṇikkavācakar conveys the same idea in his *Tiruvācakam*, 459, 155, 175, 260, etc. This could be symbolised only by a tall pillar *tāṇu* (*sthāṇu*) see Appar (4627, 4636, 5243, 6577, 6584) and Sambandar (20, 138, 214, 675, and 1420 and *Taniyan* 7695). In other places, the symbolic representation is called *Tāparam* (*sthāvara*) meaning both a shrine, and a fixed symbol or representation, a hold-fast (*parrukkodu*) synonymous with the *kandu* or *tari* or *kambam* described earlier, to which one's mind is to be tethered. It would, therefore, be more logical to assume that the early '*lingas*' of the temples in the Tamil country were only the reintroduction of the earlier *kandu* in a new form, totally devoid of phallic or fertility associations ascribed by some. Owing perhaps to the puritanic views and the strong *bhakti* movements of the *Nāyānmārs* of the period the concept of the *linga*, as well as its form, was purely a symbol of a cosmic pillar of fire and light. As such it was uninfluenced by the fertility and phallic ideas as elsewhere for which we have evidences from the recent excavations in Nāgājunakonda of the Ikshvāku period, 3-5th centuries A.D. and the early Chālukya sculptures, which too reveal a continuity of such concepts in the numerous erotic sculptures and representations of Śiva with the

ūrdhvā mēdhra, in one case double. That the contemporary revisionistic movements prevented such ideas spreading into the Tamil country will be clear, when one sees how this cult from the Chālukya country did travel in other directions eastward to Kaliṅga and north and westward to Central India and Gujarat, reaching its climax in the mediaeval period in Kōnārak and Khajuraho to name the most outstanding. Significantly enough such *mithuna* or *maithuna* sculptures or such representations of Śiva or the gods are singularly absent in the temples of the Tamil area till the Vijayanagara times, after which, when the entire south came under their rule, one sees stray examples here and there in the *gopuras* or the pillars of the *mandapas*, and more often in the wooden temple cars.

The other aniconic representation of Śiva was the ant-hill and he is referred to as *purrīdam kōṇḍār*, the *prithviliṅga*, as in Kāñchī, Tiruvārūr, and Tiruvarṇiyūr. The earliest references to the practice of representing Śiva by a mound of heaped-up earth are in the contexts where the three *Nāyanmārs* refer to Chandēśa and his story. Appar (4627 and 4636) says that Chandēśa made a form of his god, the *tāparam*, by heaping up sand under the *Attī* tree (another species of *Ficus* to which *Āl* belongs). Sambandar (670) says that Chandēśa made the *iliṅgam* with sand, and Sundarar (7382, 7786) also states that the ‘*liṅga*’ was made of sand or white sand (*Kōla ven manal*). This is again stressed by the question ‘what if the earth itself becomes the *Kamba*—‘(*vāṇam tulangil en? maṇi Kambamākil en?* — Appar, 5215)’. Even in a reference by Appar to *mānasika* or mental worship of Śiva (*Tēvāram*, 4897) the body is to be made the temple and the inner mind the *liṅga* or symbol of Śiva.

*kāyamē kōyilāka, kadimanam adimaiyāka,
vāymaiye tūymaiyāka, manamaṇi iliṅgamāka,
nēyamē neyyum pālā niraiya nīr amaiya
ātti-p-puṣanai iśanārkku-p-pōrravi-k-kāttinōmē*

The concept of *Tāparam* is also indicated by Sundarar (7893) in the context of his reference to the worship of Śiva by Agastya —“*Śandi mūnrilum tāparam nirutti, śakaļi śeydu iraiñjiya Agat-tiyar tamakku*”. That Śiva appeared in a ‘*liṅga*’ is echoed by Appar (6173). That a *liṅga purāṇa* was known in Appar’s time is clear from his reference to Śiva (6173) as *Liṅga-purāṇattu-ullān*, of which there is another reference in the *Prabandhas* —

(Nammālvār 3334—*Tiruvāyamoli*, *Nammālvār*, 4: 10, 5) as “*ilingattu-iṭṭa-purāṇīrum*”.

It is these contemporary concepts that underlie the two earliest representations of Śiva as emerging from the ‘*linga*’, on the wall of the shrine of the Kailāsanātha, Kāñchi (730 A.D.) and on the wall of the rock-cut *mandapa* of the Śiva cave temple in Tirumayam in the Pāṇḍya country, where it is a regular pillar extending from floor to ceiling, shown as if it would extend even beyond. This *Linga-purāṇa-dēvar*, as he is more correctly called in the Tamil descriptions, or *Anṇāmalaiyār* of later nomenclature, becomes a regular feature of the Śiva temples dating from 900-1000 A.D., occupying the *dēvakōshtha* on the hind wall of the *vimāna* replacing the earlier Vishṇu, Harihara or Ardhanārī forms. In this indigenous concept of gods residing in pillars (*kandu*), or emerging out of them, that was prevalent from remoter times in the Tamil country, the emergence of Śiva, in the context of the *Lingapurāṇa* story, may suggest the Śaivite parallel to the story of Vishṇu emerging as Narasimha from the pillar. From what has been stated it would be clear, that the solitary example of the Guḍimallam *linga*, on the northern borders of the Tamil country, could not be as old as the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. as held by some, since for one thing, stone *lingas* did not exist in South India at that time. It could represent only the southward extension of the phallic and fertility cults noticed in the Andhra and Chālukya areas which ended on the borders of the Tamil country. This stray example is in an apsidal stone temple of about the eleventh century A.D. and there are no other associated antiquities to show such a very early date as the centuries B.C. Here the two-armed figure said to represent Śiva stands on the head of a crouching *gaṇa*, and this concept, occurs for the first time in the figure of a four-armed Śiva standing on the crouching *gaṇa* on the southern wall niche of the *vimāna* in the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭadakkal. The supposed resemblance of the Guḍimallam *linga* figure to a Sāñchi Yaksha can at best be only accidental and not conclusive of its date.

Reference has already been made to the supposed contemporaneity of Appar with Mahēndravarman. It is based on the version of Śēkkilār who wrote some four hundred years later. According to him, after his conversion from Jainism to Śaivism by Appar, the Pallava or Kādava king demolished a number of Jain institutions ‘*Pallis* and *pālis*’ in Pāṭaliputra (modern Cudda-

lore), and with the materials thus obtained, constructed the *Kuṇadara-vīccuram* in Tiruvadigai (*Periyapurāṇam—Tirunāvukkaraśu Nāyanār Purāṇam*, vv. 145-46). The name Gunadhara has been equated with Guṇabhara, which was one of the titles of Mahēndra-varman I, and some of the subsequent editions have even corrected the text accordingly. This rather arbitrary identification apart, based on what we know from architectural history of the South Indian temples, there could not have been a stone temple (*palli*) or stone-built monastery (*pāli*) in Pāṭaliiputra in the time of Mahēndra I, but only brick and timber structures. Only a stone structure, when dismantled, can yield material for re-building elsewhere and not a brick and timber structure, the dismantling of which will yield only useless debris. Further this does not appear to be supported by any internal evidence in the *Tēvāram* itself. Mahēdravarman's capital, Kāñcī was equally a home of the Buddhists and Jains, and he does not seem to have carried on this crusade in his own capital as a zealous Śaivite convert.

The Tiruchirāpalli cave-temple inscription of Mahēndravarman I, has also been quoted in support of a part of this story, viz., his conversion to Śaivism from Jainism or his return to the proper faith from his 'hostile conduct', which is taken to be connoted by the words '*vipaksha vritti*' in the inscription. And on this tenuous thesis the cave temple with its painting in Sittannavāśal was also attributed to him. As such the Sittannavāśal cave temple has been stated to be the earliest cave temple that he excavated when he was a Jaina, even in the face of his own unambiguous statement which he has made in his Maṇḍagappaṭṭu cave temple inscription. The very wording of this inscription would show that it was composed in a mood of exultation resulting from a first achievement which was the creation of a cave temple in stone, a permanent and imperishable material, without dependence on the conventional and perishable materials. Had he excavated the Sittannavāśal cave temple earlier, the inscription must have been properly there and it would have been meaningless in Maṇḍagappaṭṭu. Further we have to remember that Sittannavāśal in the contemporary Pāṇḍya domain, was outside the Pallava borders, which in Mahēndra's time reached only up to the Kāvēri with Tiruchirāpalli on its south bank, and one cannot expect an innovator like Mahēndra to go out of his own domains and create a cave temple and thereafter make another in his own territory and exult over the latter as a unique achievement. It should be remembered in this connection that no inscription

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definitely attributable to Mahēndra or his successors is to be found south of Tiruchirāpalli till the time of Nandi II. In fact after Mahēndra's Tiruchirāpalli inscription and before Nandivarman II, no Pallava inscription has been found in the Chōla country which was in the hands of the Muttaraiyars and Pāṇḍyas. An architectural study of Mahēndra's cave temples would show that the Tiruchirāpalli example was one of the latest of the series of his cave temples, with Mandagappaṭṭu starting the list.

Again in the context of our definite knowledge, that the earlier Pallava cave temple, namely those of Mahēndra and Māmalla, did not contain a *linga*, the usual interpretation given to the term in his Tiruchirāpalli inscription will require reconsideration. The inscription which is in two parts on either side of the Gaṅgādhara panel is numbered as two different inscriptions Nos. 33 and 34 by the Epigraphist, though they reveal a continuity of purport and, No. 34 will appear to be the earlier and 33 the later part of a single inscription. The words *lingēna linginī jñānam* need not as Hultzsch and scholars following him have assumed, have a reference to the *linga* in a Śiva temple as the term is ordinarily understood. Taken with the equivalent 'Harasya tanu' and 'tanu' elsewhere in the inscription, it may connote a body or form, referring to the cave temple itself, which is amply made clear by the term '*śilāmayam tanu*'. Even Hultzsch, the editor of the inscription has been aware of the inadequacy of his translation, and the apparent contradiction.⁴⁵

In this connection it, may be noted that the name Guṇabhara occurs in the *Prabandham* (2474; *Iyarpa*, *Tiruvandādi* 4: 93) where Tirumalīśai Ālvār addresses the Lord as 'Kōnē-kunapparanē' giving him a royal attribute as 'Kon' and describing him as the repository of all virtues (*guṇas*). The date of this Ālvar is believed to be later than Mahēndra, and as c. 850 A.D.⁴⁶ when no contemporary

45. *South Indian Inscriptions*, I, p. 29. In the note below he says that "the whole verse is a double entendre and it contains allusions to Indian logic (*tarka sāstra*) in which *lingin* means the subject of a proposition, *linga* the predicate, and *vipaksha* an instance on the opposite side". This inscription has been noticed more fully in a forthcoming publication of mine, shortly to be published.

46. Vaiyapuri Pillai, *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, Madras 1956), pp. 120-21. If the tradition of his meeting the three Ālvārs is any indication, his date may be in the later part of the 7th century A.D.

king had the title *gunabhara*. The term *Gunadhara-Isvara* likewise must have been after one of Śiva's names—*Guṇadhara* the bearer of all *guṇas* (perhaps the *trigunas*), and need not necessarily reflect the name of any contemporary king. But two obviously Pallava constructions, *viz.*, Mahēndrappalli and Pallavaniccuram were noticed by the Nāyanmārs and sung by them because they were of the conventional type of brick and timber, and not the stone excavations or constructions as many others not noticed by them were.

Architectural and antiquarian history does not take the date of the founding of Māmallapuram earlier than Narasimhavarman Māmalla (630-660 A.D.). Bhūtattālvār who is reputed to be a native of Kadanmallai, another name of the same place given to it in the *prabandhams* of the later Ālvārs, refers to the place as 'Māmallai'. This would clearly denote the origin of the place name as after Māmalla and no earlier name has been known for this place. The verse has a list of other sacred places also of which Tañjai is one (*Prabandham* 2251; *Iyarpa Tiruvandādi* 2: 70, Bhūtattālvār). The earliest reference to Tañjai is perhaps in the short inscription in the natural cavern on the Tiruchirāpalli rock reading '*Tamcha haraka*' attributed to Mahēndravarman I and believed, perhaps rightly so, to refer to Tañjai, the modern Tanjore.⁴⁷ It rose to importance in the time of the Muttaraiyars who became powerful after Māmalla's time when the Pallavas lost hold of the Chōla country on the banks of the Kāvēri, and Vijayālaya Chōla founded his capital there, after defeating the Muttaraiyars. It is not mentioned in the earlier *Saṅgam* or post-*Saṅgam* classics. These would indicate a date in the second half of the 7th century A.D. for Bhūtattālvār.

That the Śaiva and Vaishṇava *bhakti* movements could not have started earlier than the middle of the seventh century A.D. seems to be indicated also by another independent evidence. Yuan Chwang who visited South India in 642 A.D. and wrote about Kāñchī, has not noticed the movement. It cannot be said that he was unaware of contemporary religious trends for he notices the worshippers of the Dēva (Śiva) in Maharashtra who 'covered themselves with ashes' and in speaking of South India he expresses regret that his own creed of Buddhism was on the wane and

47. *Annual Report, South Indian Epigraphy, 1937-38*, no. 135, also part II, para 3.

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repeatedly remarks that it had yielded to Digambara Jainism—mark, not to Śaivism as in Maharashtra. This would again place the *Tēvāram*, and the *Prabandham* likewise, after the first half of the seventh century A.D. which is borne out by the sculptural and iconographic evidences discussed above.

While only the most important aspects of concepts and god-heads could be taken up for study here, enough material remains for a similar study of the other forms of the major gods, and minor forms of god-heads like Indra, Dikpalas etc. A complete study of all the forms, will therefore be desirable in the present context of material evidence that has accumulated. The object of the present study would be achieved, if it has stimulated such an all-sided enquiry, from the literary, archaeological, architectural and sculptural stand-points.

Illustrations:

Plates I, II-B, III, IV V-A, VII, VIII, IX & X.

—Courtesy Department of Archaeology, Government of India.

Plates II-A, V-B & C, VI.

—Courtesy Madras Government Museum, Madras.

PLATE I

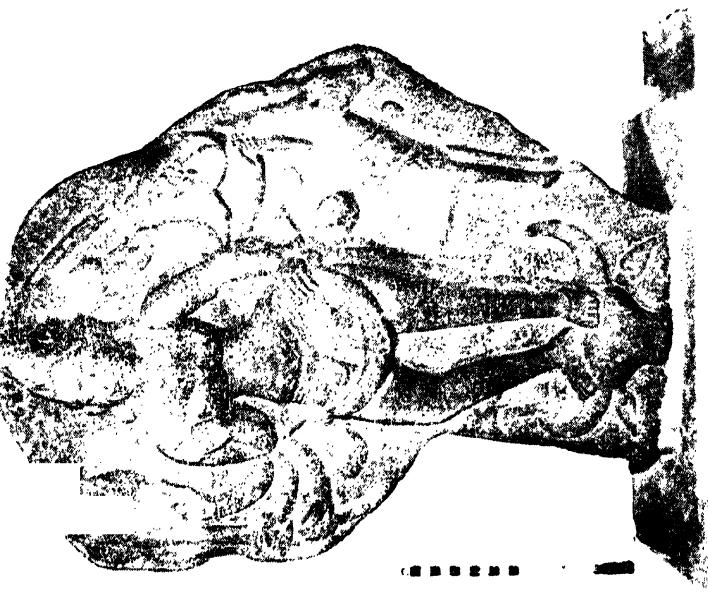


Krishna, Nappinnai and Balarāma, Gōvardhana scene, Mahābalipuram.
See page 17.



Harihara, Adivaraha cave temple,
Mahābalipuram. See page 18.

PLATE II



A. Durgā with deer mount (Tanjore), Madras Museum.
See page 23.



B. Durgā with lion mount, Panamalai. See page 28.

PLATE III



Durgā, Varāha cave temple, Mahābalipuram. See page 29.



Durgā, Adivarāha cave temple, Mahābalipuram. See page 29.

PLATE IV



Durgā, Singavaram. See page 29.

Durgā, Draupadi ratha, Mahabalipuram. See page 28.



PLATE V



A. Ardhanāri (four-armed), Draupadi ratha,
Mahabalipuram. See page 31.

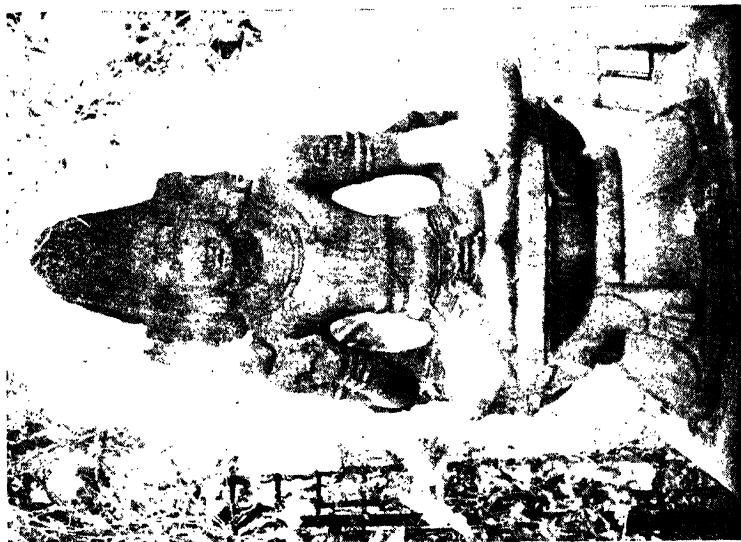


B. Ardhanāri (seated) Kandiyur.
See page 31.



C. Ardhanāri, Kodumbalur
See page 31.

PLATE VI



Brahma (without beard), Kanliyur. See page 49.



Brahma (bearded), Kandiyur. See page 49.

PLATE VII



A

Subrahmanya's banner. (A) Peacock; (B) Cock, Lādankōvil, Anamalai (Madurai). See page 44.



B

PLATE VIII



Dancing Śiva, Śyamāṅgalam. See page 59.

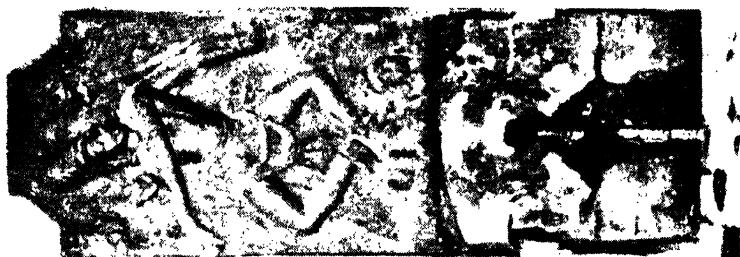


Subrahmanyam, Tirumalai (Ramanāthapuram). See page 45.

PLATE IX



Natesa. Tiruvälisvaram. See page 60.



Dancing Šiva. Cave temple, Thiruppārankunram
See page 60.

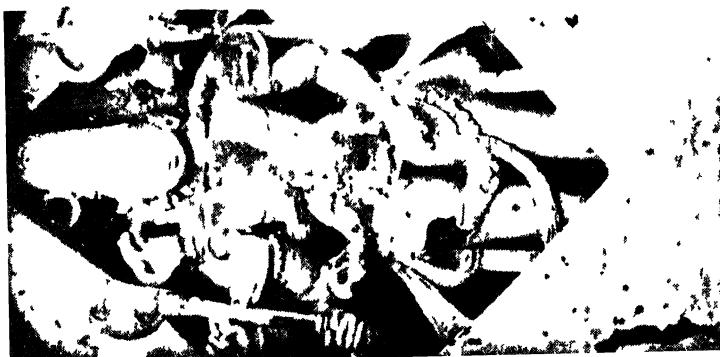


Dancing Šiva. Cave temple, Thiruppārankunram
See page 60.

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